INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

BY

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To

FRIEDRICH PAULSEN

THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

BY HIS FRIEND AND PUPIL

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INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND METHODS OF ETHICS[1]

1. *The Function of Science.* — The world presents us with an endless array of phenomena. These phenomena the human mind observes and endeavors to understand. It notices that things and occurrences are, to a certain extent, uniform and constant, that nature is regular and orderly. The intellect of man strives to detect similarities or uniformities in things and actions, and to arrange these in groups or classes. It brings order into apparent confusion,

[1] Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, pp. 1–24; *The History of Ethics*, chap. i; Stephen, *The Science of Ethics*, pp. 1–40; Schurman, *The Ethical Import of Darwinism*, pp. 1–37; Höffding, *Ethik*, pp. 1–54; Münsterberg, *Der Ursprung der Sittlichkeit*, pp. 1–10; Wundt, *Ethics*, English translation, pp. 1–20; Paulsen, *A System of Ethics*, edited and translated by Frank Thilly, pp. 1–29; Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 1–39; Mackenzie, *Manual of Ethics*, pp. 1–31, 324–328; Hyslop, *The Elements of Ethics*, pp. 1–17; J. Seth, *A Study of Ethical Principles*, pp. 1–35; Marion, *Leçons de morale*, chap. i; Runze, *Ethik*, Vol. I, pp. 1–16; Dorner, *Das menschliche Handeln*, Introduction; Sigwart, *Logic*, translated by Helen Dendy, Vol. II, pp. 529 ff. The beginner will find the works of Paulsen, Muirhead, Mackenzie, and Hyslop especially serviceable in connection with this chapter.

it makes a cosmos out of the chaos, it analyzes and classifies.

But it does not stop here. It would know *why* things are as they are, why they act as they act. The thinker is not content with knowing *what* is; the great question is, Why is it so, what is the reason for its being as it is? What is its relation to other things and occurrences, what are the antecedents and concomitants upon which it is said to depend, and without which it cannot be what it is? What are its consequents or effects; in short, *what place does it occupy in the world of facts, how does it fit into the system of things?* The tendency to find out the why and wherefore of things is universal; it manifests itself in the child who wonders "what makes the wheels go round" in his plaything, no less than in the natural philosopher who longs to know why the rain falls and the wind blows and the grass grows. And there is something of a Newton in the most superstitious savage. Science begins with a question mark; it begins when reasons are sought after, and its perfection is measured by the manner in which its problems are solved. Events which were once explained by supernatural causes are now referred to their natural antecedents or concomitants, but the scientific instinct is essentially the same as in those dark ages when our benighted forefathers ascribed the thunder to the thunder god, and regarded Apollo as the hurler of the shafts of disease and death. The scientist is

born when man begins to wonder at facts, and aims to correlate them with other facts or insert them into a system, be it ever so crude.[1]

2. *The Subject-matter of the Sciences.* — Science, therefore, analyzes, classifies, and explains phenomena. Now we may, for the sake of order and convenience, arrange these phenomena into different groups or classes, and form different sciences. Each particular science marks out for itself a particular subject-matter, and studies this. Thus physics investigates the general properties of matter, biology treats of matter in the living state, psychology examines mental processes or states of consciousness. Each of these sciences may in turn be subdivided until we have an endless number of special sciences, corresponding to limited fields of investigation. In every case, however, the attempt is made not only

[1] See Muirhead, *The Elements of Ethics*, § 8; Hibben, *Inductive Logic*, chap. i; Creighton, *Logic*, §§ 49, 59 ff., 78, 88; Sigwart, *Logic*, Vol. II, pp. 417 ff. I quote from Creighton's *Logic*, p. 285: "We have said that Judgment constructs a *system* of knowledge. This implies, then, that it is not merely a process of adding one fact to another, as we might add one stone to another to form a heap. No! Judgment combines the new facts with which it deals with what is already known, in such a way as to give to each its own proper place. Different facts are not only brought together, but they are arranged, related, systematized. No fact is allowed to stand by itself, but has to take its place as a member of a larger system of facts, and receive its value from this connection. Of course, a single judgment is not sufficient to bring a large number of facts into relation in this way. But each judgment contributes *something* to this end, and brings some new fact into relation to what is already known."

to analyze and classify and describe, but also to explain, to account for a particular group of facts, to tell why they are so and not otherwise, to ascertain the conditions or circumstances which made them what they are, to relate them to other facts, to insert them into a system, as was indicated above.

3. *The Science of Ethics.* — Among the sciences referred to is one called *ethics*, which we are going to study in this book. It will be our business, first of all, to specify the facts or phenomena, the subject-matter, with which this branch of knowledge concerns itself. And here, perhaps, the different names that have been used at various times to designate our science may help us to understand its boundaries. The ancient Greeks employed the terms, *τὰ ἠθικά* (*ta ēthica*), *ἠθικὴ ἐπιστήμη* (*ēthicē ĕpistēmē*), ethics, ethical science.[1] The word *ἠθικός* is derived from the word *ἦθος* (*ēthŏs*), character, disposition, which is connected with *ἔθος* (*ĕthŏs*), custom or habit. The Latin equivalent for the name ethics is *philosophia moralis*,[2] from which comes the English

[1] Though Aristotle (died 323 B.C.) was perhaps the first to employ the term *ethics* in a strictly technical sense, the name was used by Xenocrates (313 B.C.), and perhaps also by the Cyrenaics. See Sextus Empiricus, *Ad. Mathematicos*, VII, 15. See also Runze. *Ethik*, p. 1; Wundt, *Ethics*, Part I, chap. i.

[2] See Wundt, *Ethics*, English translation, p. 26: "The term *moralis*, which gave rise to the expression *philosophia moralis*, was a direct translation from Aristotle. Cicero remarks expressly, in the passage where he introduces the word, that he has formed it on the analogy of the Greek *ēthicŏs* (*ἠθικός*), 'in order to enrich the Latin language.'"

appellation, *moral philosophy* or *moral science*.[1] The term *practical philosophy* is also used as a synonym of ethics, or as a more comprehensive generic term including both ethics and politics;[2] practical because it investigates practice or conduct.[3]

The subject-matter of ethics is morality, the phenomenon of right and wrong. It is a fact that men call certain characters and actions moral and immoral, right and wrong, good and bad, that they approve of them and disapprove of them, express moral judgments upon them, *evaluate* them. They feel morally bound to do certain things or to leave them undone, they recognize the authority of certain rules or laws, and acknowledge their binding

[1] Compare the titles of the works of Paley, Stewart, Reid, Calderwood, Porter, Bain, Bentham, Whewell, Price, Hume, and others.

[2] Compare Lotze, *Practische Philosophie;* Hodgson, *Theory of Practice*.

[3] The term *ethics* is the preferable one, as it is freest from ambiguity. The name *moral philosophy*, or *moral science*, was formerly used in the sense of *mental science* to distinguish the study of mental phenomena from that of physical phenomena, or natural philosophy. The term *practical philosophy* is also misleading. The science which studies the principles of conduct or practice is just as theoretical as physics, physiology, or chemistry. Ethics is, like all sciences, both speculative and practical, both a science and an art. It is speculative, or theoretical, in so far as it analyzes, classifies, and explains its phenomena, or searches after their principles or laws, practical in so far as it applies these principles or laws, or puts them into practice. Physiology and chemistry are theories, medicine is practice, or the application of the laws or truths discovered by biology, chemistry, and physics. It is confusing to call ethics practical philosophy simply because it deals with practice. See § 12 of this chapter.

force. They say: This ought to be done, this ought not to be done; thou shalt, and thou shalt not. In short, we seem to approach the world with a certain moral form or category, to impress it with a certain moral stamp; we look at it through moral spectacles, as it were.

Now this fact is as capable and as worthy of investigation as any other fact in the universe, and we need a science that will subject it to careful analysis. Three problems here present themselves for our consideration. (1) What differentiates the subject-matter of ethics from that of other fields of knowledge? What is there in an ethical phenomenon that allows us to refer it to a special class? In what does it differ from a fact of physics or æsthetics? (2) How shall we explain the fact that men judge ethically, that they pronounce judgment as they do? What do we mean when we say that an act is right or wrong; what is taking place in our consciousness under these circumstances? Is there anything in man that makes him judge as he judges, and what is it? Why does man evaluate as he does? Is it because certain moral truths are written on his heart, because he possesses an innate faculty of knowledge, a conscience, a universal, original, immutable power of the soul that enables him immediately to discriminate the right from the wrong? Or do we gradually *learn* to make moral distinctions; is the ability to judge morally which we now possess an acquired one, a product of evolution, and as such capable

of further development? (3) What is the nature of acts which are designated as right and wrong? Why are they right and wrong? Is there anything in them, any quality or attribute, that makes them right and wrong, or that makes men call them so? If so, what is it?

All these are questions for the moralist to decide. He must calmly, carefully, and impartially investigate the facts, and, if possible, explain them; he must search after the principles or laws underlying them, if there be any; he must unify them, if that can be done. He must analyze and explain both character and conduct, the inside and outside of action, the *mental* factor, conscience, or moral judgment, and the *physical* factor, the act which it judges. He must tell us what they are, and why they are so; he must account for them, show us their *raison d'être*, indicate to us the place which they occupy in the system of things.

4. *The Data of Ethics.* — We have stated in a general way what is the subject-matter with which our science deals, and how it is to be treated. Let us now attempt to show what differentiates ethical facts from other facts. Let us imagine that a person has killed a fellow-creature with malice aforethought. We call the deed murder, we pronounce moral judgment upon it; we say, It is wrong, wicked, reprehensible. The same act, however, may be looked at from the physical or physiological point of view. The energy stored up in the brain cells of

the murderer was liberated by certain currents coming from the periphery, and discharged into efferent nerves connected with certain muscles, which produced the movement of the arm and hand holding the weapon of destruction. And the blow on the victim's skull so injured his brain and the vital functions dependent upon the nervous system as to cause death. The prosecuting attorney, ignoring the physiological and even moral factors involved, may look at the act purely from the legal standpoint. To kill a person with malice aforethought is a crime prohibited by law and punishable by death. The psychologist may try to explain the psychology of the entire affair. Certain motives were aroused in the mind of the murderer by the behavior of his future victim. These motives became more and more intense, and the inhibitions weaker and weaker, until a resolution was finally formed which led to the act.

We see, one and the same circumstance may be examined from different points of view ; each individual thinker may select particular elements in it for study, and ignore the others. The physicist looks at the rainbow and tries to understand its physical conditions. I may contemplate it and call it beautiful, and then ask myself what makes it beautiful ; why is it that the contemplation of such a phenomenon arouses a peculiar æsthetic feeling in me ? The science of æsthetics is appealed to for an answer to this question. In ethics we do not care for the physical or physiological causes which

have produced the acts, motives, and characters with which we are concerned; all these have interest for us only because, and in so far as, we stamp them with a certain value, only because they bear a certain relation to the human soul, only because they provoke peculiar ethical feelings and judgments in us. Acts which are capable of exciting such judgments fall within the province of the science of ethics. There could be no science of ethics if no one ever approved and disapproved of things, if no one ever called things right and wrong. If the contemplation of certain acts and motives did not arouse in us ethical feelings and judgments, there could be no science of ethics because there would be no facts for ethics to study. We might perhaps be perfect physicists, physiologists, astronomers, and even philosophers, but we should never pronounce moral judgment upon an act. (*That we place a value upon things, that we call them right or good, wrong or bad, is the important fact in ethics, is what makes a science of ethics possible.*[1])

5. *The Subject-matter of Ethical Judgment.* — We said before that moral judgment was pronounced upon acts, but, we must add, not upon all acts. We do not feel like judging unless the act is the product of some conscious being like ourself. We do not call an earthquake or a cyclone right or wrong; as Martineau says, "we neither applaud the gold-mine

[1] See Höffding, *Ethik*, III, and his *Ethische Principienlehre;* Münsterberg, *Der Ursprung der Sittlichkeit*, pp. 10 ff.

nor blame the destructive storm."[1] The child and the savage may applaud and condemn such occurrences and inanimate objects, but this is most likely because they regard them as endowed with soul, or because they have heard others do so. Generally speaking, we nowadays limit our judgments to the actions of conscious human beings. We expect the act to have a mental or psychical background. When the act is the expression of a conscious human being, we feel like judging it morally. But when we are told that the agent did not control it, that it occurred without his willing it, or that he was not capable of reasoning and feeling and willing in a healthy manner at the time of its performance, then we withhold our judgment. We do not praise or blame the movements made in an epileptic fit, or hypnotic trance, or in sleep, or reflex actions over which the person has no power. Nor do we condemn or approve of the acts of a lunatic. But in case any of the acts under consideration are the necessary consequents of some previous conduct of the doer, which, we believe, he might have avoided, we pronounce judgment upon them, or at any rate upon *him*. Wherever we are convinced that the acts were purely mechanical, that is, physically determined, and not accompanied by consciousness, we do not judge them morally. But whenever consciousness is present in the performance of the act, we are tempted to judge.

[1] *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II, p. 20.

Let us therefore say that the subject-matter of ethical judgment is human conduct, that is, consciously purposive action.[1] We must not forget, however, that this was not always the case, and is not even now, perhaps, universally true. But it makes no difference to us here upon what the mind pronounces its judgments. The important thing for ethics is that such judgments are pronounced at all, and it is the business of the science to examine every fact or act which is judged ethically, or is capable of being so judged.

6. *Definition of Ethics.* — Ethics may now be roughly defined as the science of right and wrong, the science of duty, the science of moral principles, the science of moral judgment and conduct. It analyzes, classifies, describes, and explains moral phenomena, on their *subjective* as well as on their *objective* side. It tells us what these phenomena are, separates them into their constituent elements, and refers them to their antecedents or conditions; it discovers the principles upon which they are based, the laws which govern them; it explains their origin and traces their development. In short, it reflects upon them, thinks them over, attempts to answer all possible questions which may be asked with reference to them. It does with its facts what every science does with its subject-matter: it strives to know everything that

[1] See Seth, *A Study of Ethical Principles*, chap. i; Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, chap i; Muirhead, *A Manual of Ethics*, pp. 15–17; Martineau, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, chap. i.

can be known about them, to correlate them, to unify them, to insert them into a system.

7. *The Interrelation of Sciences.* — When we say, however, as we did before, that there are separate sciences, we do not wish to be understood as meaning that these sciences are absolutely distinct from each other, that their respective facts are to be studied apart from all other phenomena in the world. This is not the case. The world presents itself to us as *one*, as a unity, a concrete whole. The mind splits it up into parts, but these parts are by no means really separate, independent entities. No phenomenon can be thoroughly understood in isolation, apart from all other phenomena. Strictly speaking, we cannot know one fact without knowing them all. "To know one thing thoroughly," as Professor James says, "would be to know the whole universe. Mediately or immediately, that one thing is related to everything else; and to know all about it, all its relations need be known."[1] Tennyson expresses the same idea poetically in the oft-quoted lines: —

> "Little flower — but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

[1] See Leibniz, *Monadology*, § 61: "Everybody is affected by everything that happens in the world, so that a man seeing everything would know from each particular object everything that takes place everywhere, as well as what has taken place and will take place; he perceives in the present that which is remote in time and space." Cf. Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy*, translated by Frank Thilly, pp. 145 ff.

And as the world is one, science is one. Sciences depend upon each other, are subservient to each other. Thus the facts of psychology are in some way related to the facts of physiology and physics; we cannot study the phenomenon of sensation without referring to the functions of the nervous system and the properties of matter.

8. *Ethics and Psychology.* — Inasmuch as the facts of ethics are not isolated and independent, but are connected with the rest of the world, it is natural that the science of ethics should stand in some relation to the other sciences. If ethics is concerned with human beings, it will necessarily have something to do with the science of human nature. If ethics has to examine the conduct of man, and if conduct is not merely physical movement, but the outward expression, or sign, or aspect, of states of consciousness, and if the important thing in ethics is the fact that human beings judge of things in a certain way, then, of course, ethics is bound to depend, in a large measure, upon *psychology*. Psychology analyzes, classifies, and explains states of consciousness. Although all such states are of interest to the moralist, some of them require especial attention from him. The so-called ethical sentiments, the feeling of obligation, etc., are mental phenomena, and as such must be analyzed and explained by him; and they cannot be treated apart from the rest of consciousness. Thus, when the ethicist analyzes and describes the conscience, he

is doing the work of the psychologist. And when he studies the moral nature of the infant and the primitive man, as he sometimes does, with a view to tracing the development of the conscience, he is still within the field of psychology. He may likewise consider animal states of consciousness, and search for the beginnings of conscience there, as Darwin did, in which case he is pursuing a psychological investigation.

Indeed, we may say that in so far as ethics deals with moral states of consciousness, it is simply a special branch of psychology.[1] But our science does not only look at the subjective side of conduct, it investigates the objective side also, and the relation which this bears to the subjective. What, it asks, is the nature of the acts which are judged moral; do they possess some mark or characteristic that makes them moral or leads men to call them so? Why do men judge as they do; what is the ground of moral distinctions? Why is wrong wrong, and right right? Explain the virtues and duties, *e.g.*, benevolence, charity, justice, veracity, etc., and their opposites. Is there a standard or criterion or ideal by which conduct is judged, and what is it? Can we justify this standard or ideal, or is it something that cannot or need not be justified? Given a certain ideal or

[1] See, for example, Ladd's treatment of the ethical sentiments in his *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory*, and Sully's account of the ethical or moral sentiments in the second volume of his *Human Mind*, or, in fact, any modern work on psychology.

standard, what conduct is moral, what immoral? Does humanity remain true to the ideal? What is the highest good for man, the end of life? Can we specify it scientifically, or is it impossible to do so?

Such are some of the questions which our science asks and seeks to answer. Should it be said that these also are problems for psychology to solve, we should raise no serious objection. The important thing is that the phenomena in question be examined and explained; whether by psychology or a special science does not matter. Ethical facts are, to a great extent, mental processes, and as such objects of psychological study. But the same may truthfully be said of the data of æsthetics. A science must thoroughly explain its facts, and, strictly speaking, psychology would have to explain ethical and æsthetical facts. But sciences divide their labor, and it is in keeping with the practices of modern scientific research that psychology should hand over to a special discipline the consideration of a particular set of its facts.

Besides, there are certain questions, as we have just seen, which are not usually considered by the psychologist. The psychologist studies states of consciousness as such; he regards his work as completed when he has analyzed psychical phenomena and has referred them to their necessary psychical, or, if he be physiologically inclined, psychophysical antecedents. He does not, as a rule, inquire into the principles underlying conduct; he does not concern

himself with the question, What is the end of life, or what is the standard or criterion by which acts are measured? But he could do so and still remain within the confines of his proper field of study. Such an investigation would surely assist him in better understanding the workings of the human mind, just as a knowledge of physics and chemistry would enable the physiologist better to understand the subject-matter of his science.[1]

9. *Ethics and Politics.* — The relation which ethics bears to the science of politics largely depends upon our conception of the nature and function of these two sciences. If we assume with Plato that ethics is the science of the highest good, and that the object of the State is to realize that end, then politics depends upon ethics, for we cannot tell what the State ought to do until we know what the highest good is. But if the State is the highest good, then conduct has value only in so far as it subserves the interests of the State, and ethics is simply a branch of, or another name for, politics, as Aristotle declares.

But let us say, ethics is the science of right and wrong; it discovers the principles of conduct, shows the ground of moral distinctions. Politics has to do

[1] With the view advanced above Münsterberg, *Der Ursprung der Sittlichkeit*, and Simmel, *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, agree. See also Sully, *The Human Mind*, Appendix L. Mackenzie, *A Manual of Ethics*, especially Appendix B, opposes the conception.

with the nature, origin, and development of the State; it studies the different forms in which the State appears and has appeared, and strives to define the functions which it performs. It deals, let us say, with the principles of organized society. Now if ethics should discover that morality realizes a certain end or aim, and that the fact that it realizes such an end explains its existence, and if politics should find that the State realizes the same end, then there would evidently be a close connection between the two. Should we be fortunate enough to discover a principle or standard of morals, we should be able to say, in a general way, how a man ought to act in order to realize the ideal; we should be able to construct a moral code. And should we be able to specify the end or ideal aimed at by the State, we could compare the two ends or purposes. Should they be the same, then politics might be called a branch of ethics or *vice versa*. Ethics would lay down the general rules of conduct; it would tell us how to act as individuals. Politics would tell the State how to act; it would be a guide to the conduct of man in organized society.[1]

10. *Ethics and Metaphysics.* — A science, as we have seen, analyzes, classifies, and explains a particular set of phenomena. Strictly speaking, no fact is explained until we know all about it, until we understand its relation to the entire universe. To

[1] See Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, Bk. I, chap. ii; Mackenzie, § 6; Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 34 ff.

know one thing well means to know everything, as we have already pointed out.[1] An ideal science would therefore be able to account for every single fact within its domain and coördinate it with the rest of reality. As a matter of fact, however, this ideal is not realized. The different sciences do not even aim at so high a goal. They do not go very far in their search for the causes of things, nor do they attempt to understand the world as a whole. When a science has referred an event to an antecedent, and this perhaps to another antecedent or group of antecedents, it is apt to regard its work as done. The physicist as such, for example, studies the properties of matter, the laws of motion. He does not concern himself with the question regarding the ultimate nature and origin of these data, nor does he seek to correlate them with other forms of reality, say with the phenomena of mind. Nay, the temptation is strong to regard his facts as the ultimate and most important facts, and to subordinate all others to them. The biologist studies the different forms of living matter which occur upon our earth; he investigates the structure and function of organisms and compares them with each other. It is true that the tendency toward unification is stronger in biology than in many other sciences, and that attempts have been made to derive the more complex forms of life from simple beginnings; but in so far as this is the case, biology more nearly realizes the ideal

[1] See § 7 of this chapter.

of science than the other sciences. Still, there are final problems which the biologist as such does not undertake to solve. The psychologist, again, analyzes and explains states of consciousness; he splits up the mind into its elements and refers them to their physical and psychical antecedents. But the questions, What is the ultimate nature and origin of consciousness or soul? How is such a thing as mind possible at all? Whence comes it and whither does it go? What is its relation to matter and motion? are left unanswered.[1]

Every science, then, confines itself to a particular group of phenomena and seeks to explain these in terms of each other.[2] But certain ultimate questions suggest themselves, which, though hard to answer, cannot be brushed aside. These questions are handed over to philosophy or metaphysics for settlement. Philosophy simply means, as James puts it, "an unusually obstinate attempt to think clearly and consistently." To philosophize means to go to the very bottom of things, to think a problem out to the bitter end, to account for everything, to understand everything. In strictness, every science should be philosophical, it should not stop until all questions have been answered. And as a matter of fact, there are philosophical scientists in every

[1] It cannot be denied, of course, that every science makes certain metaphysical assumptions, that it practically starts out with the metaphysics of common sense.

[2] In so far as it does this, we might call it *empirical*, as distinguished from *rational* or *metaphysical*.

sphere of science, men who like Wilhelm von Humboldt, Darwin, Huxley, and Helmholtz, cross the narrow confines of the particular fields in which they happen to be working, and look at the universe as a whole.

Now the remarks which apply to the other sciences likewise apply to ethics. Ethics investigates a particular branch of facts and has to explain them. An ideal science of ethics will not stop until it thoroughly understands the phenomena with which it deals, and this, as we have seen, is not possible without *universal* knowledge. To realize its ideal, ethics must become philosophical, must be philosophy. In this respect, however, we repeat, it in no wise differs from the other sciences.

We shall not, however, in this book, attempt to do more than the average science does with its subject-matter. We shall be satisfied if we succeed in finding the general principles underlying morality. We must leave it to the philosophers to solve the *ultimate* problems of ethics and to insert the facts of morality into the *universal* system of things.[1]

11. *The Methods of Ethics.* — Let us next consider the methods of ethics. The method to be pursued by our science does not, generally speaking, differ from that followed by other sciences. We must examine moral phenomena with the same

[1] For the relation of philosophy to the sciences, see Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 15 ff.; Külpe, *Introduction to Philosophy;* Münsterberg, *Der Ursprung der Sittlichkeit,* 1 ff.

care practised in other fields of research. We must observe and collect moral facts wherever we can. We must investigate the modes of conduct of different races, nations, classes, individuals, and periods of time. We must watch the behavior of the civilized and uncivilized, adults and children, men and women; we must go as far back to the beginnings of history as we can; we must study the mythology, theology, philosophy, literature, and art of the different peoples, in order to discover what they considered right and wrong; we must look at their language, "the fossilized spiritual life of mankind," at their systems of law, at their political, social, and economic conditions, which are to a large extent an embodiment of their morality. What a wealth of moral facts we find in the works of Homer, Hesiod, and the Greek tragedians, in Shakespeare, Byron, and Goethe! What an insight we gain into the moral feelings of the Middle Ages from the contemplation of their great works of art; and how much the social conditions of our own times tell us of the moral ideals of the age!

Facts, then, must be gathered in our science, both external and internal facts. We must look outward and inward. But we must also study and seek to interpret these facts; *we must reflect and speculate upon them.* No science can live without speculation. You may gather facts by the thousands and be no better off than before; they are merely the raw material upon which you must work,

which you must form into a system. We must pass from facts to principles. The mere observance of facts will lead to nothing. Only a highly synthetic, only an imaginative mind, one that can peer through the outward shell into the very heart of nature, is capable of advancing science.

12. *Theoretical Ethics and Practical Ethics.* — We may distinguish between theoretical ethics and practical ethics. A science or theory, as has been said, teaches us to know, and an art to do.[1] In studying a subject theoretically or scientifically in this sense, we seek to discover the principles or laws governing our phenomena. Anatomy and physiology are theories in so far as they examine the general structure and functions of organisms. After we have found the principles or laws, we apply them, we put them into practice, we lay down certain rules which must be obeyed in order that we may reach certain ends. The science or theory of physiology teaches us how the body functions, what causes it to function in this way, what are the conditions essential to its functioning so. The art or practice of hygiene frames rules based upon these principles, the observance of which is essential to health. The science of psychology tells us what are the conditions or causes of certain mental phenomena; pedagogy applies the truths discovered by the psychologist in practice. Every art bases itself upon a theory; and the more developed the art the more developed, as

[1] See Sully, *Teacher's Handbook of Psychology*, chap. i.

a rule, the theory upon which it rests. And the final end or purpose of every science or theory is to be of some practical use.[1]

Now there is also a science or theory of ethics and an art of ethics. The science discovers the principles, the art applies them. The science teaches us what *is* done, the art what *ought to be* done. Practical ethics is the application of theoretical ethics.[2]

13. *The Value of Ethics.* — In conclusion, let us consider the value of ethics for the student. Why should we study ethics? Well, why study anything? Morality is a fact, and as such deserves to be studied. Man is a reflective being, and, therefore, bound to take cognizance of everything in the universe. His own conduct is surely important and interesting enough to merit the attention which is given to the study of physical occurrences. Man

[1] See Drobisch, *Logik*, p. 165.

[2] For views similar to the above, see the references to Münsterberg, Simmel, Paulsen, and Stephen, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. See also Ziegler, *Sittliches Sein und sittliches Werden*. Many writers, following Wundt (*Ethik*, Part I, Introduction), compare ethics to logic, and call it a *normative* science (Normwissenschaft). According to them, logic gives us the laws of correct thinking, the norms or rules which must be observed in order to reach truth. It also measures our thinking by these rules or norms, and judges its value accordingly. Ethics tells us how we ought to act in order to act ethically, or morally; it lays down norms, or rules of conduct, which the agent must obey in order to insure the morality of his conduct. See Hyslop, Muirhead, Mackenzie. In this sense, however, it seems to me, every science that can be applied in practice is normative. — Cf. Spencer, *Social Statics*, p. 458.

has conquered the forces of nature because he has thought about them, because he has subjected them to critical analysis. It is to be supposed that the examination of moral forces will be equally fruitful. The discovery of an ethical criterion will surely assist us in answering troublesome ethical questions. We do not always know what is right and what is wrong; we must reflect upon our conduct, we need a standard or ideal with which to measure it. There can be no great progress in morals without reflection. Men are often ignorant of the right; they have to reason it out, they need a firm foundation on which to base it. Or they often become sceptical with regard to morals; they observe a great divergence in modes of conduct, and are apt to regard morality as a collection of arbitrary rules having no real binding force. A closer study of the moral world will easily show the falseness of this view, and establish ethical truths upon a solid basis.

I do not, of course, wish to be understood as claiming that morality is impossible without reflection upon morality, or a science of ethics. This would be like saying that there can be no seeing without a science of vision. Before there can be a science of optics men must possess the power of sight; before there can be a science of ethics men must act. But just as the science of optics greatly assists us in our attempts to see things, so the science of ethics is an aid to action.

It is held by some, however, that reflection upon

moral matters is apt to weaken a person's power of action, and that a study of ethics is, therefore, dangerous to morality. Even if this were so, it could not hinder men from theorizing on the principles of conduct. But the view is false. A careful and thorough examination of the field of morals will, it seems to me, inspire us with a greater respect for morality, and strengthen our impulses toward the good. Of course, hasty and superficial judgments upon ethical facts are, like all half-truths, dangerous. But the best way to combat them is to prove their falseness; the best cure for a half-truth is always a whole truth.

CHAPTER II

THEORIES OF CONSCIENCE[1]

1. *Introduction.* — We pronounce moral judgments upon ourselves as well as upon others; we distin-

[1] For a history of ethical theories, see, besides the Histories of Philosophy: Köstlin, *Die Ethik des classischen Altertums;* Luthardt, *Die antike Ethik;* Ziegler, *Die Ethik der Griechen und Römer;* Gass, *Geschichte der christlichen Ethik;* Gass, *Die Lehre vom Gewissen;* Ziegler, *Geschichte der christlichen Ethik;* Luthardt, *Geschichte der christlichen Ethik;* Jodl, *Geschichte der Ethik in der neueren Philosophie;* Gizycki, *Die Ethik David Hume's;* Whewell, *History of Moral Philosophy;* J. H. Fichte, *System der Ethik;* Vorländer, *Geschichte der philosophischen Moral, Rechts- und Staatslehre;* Mackintosh, *On the Progress of Ethical Philosophy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries;* Stephen, *English Thought of the Eighteenth Century;* Guyau, *La morale anglaise contemporaine;* Fouillée, *Critique des systèmes de morale contemporains;* Williams, *A Review of Evolutional Ethics;* Sidgwick, *Outline of a History of Ethics;* Janet, *Histoire de la philosophie morale et politique;* Paulsen, *A System of Ethics*, pp. 33–215; Wundt, *Ethics*, Vol. II; J. Seth, *A Study of Ethical Principles*, pp. 77–249; Watson, *Hedonistic Theories from Aristippus to Spencer;* Hyslop, *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 18–89; Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory;* Calderwood, *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, 16th edition, pp. 318 ff.; Eucken, *Die Lebensanschauungen der grossen Denker.* For a history of ethical conceptions, see also Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen;* Lecky, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne;* Friedländer, *Die Sittengeschichte Roms;* Keim, *Rom und das Christentum.* Sutherland's *Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct* contains much valuable material. Consult also the bibliographies in my translation of Paulsen's *Ethics.* For bibliog-

guish between rightness and wrongness in thoughts, feelings, volitions, acts, institutions, and so forth. We insist upon the performance of certain modes of conduct and the avoidance of others; we command categorically, Thou shalt, and thou shalt not. We regard ourselves and our fellows as morally bound or *obliged* to do certain things, and to refrain from others. The breach of rules which we feel ought to be obeyed is condemned by us even when we ourselves are the offenders.

Let us embrace all these facts under a general formula, and say that man pronounces moral judgments, or distinguishes between right and wrong; man has a moral consciousness or a *conscience*. The question naturally arises, How is this fact to be explained? We cannot solve this problem until we have carefully analyzed the phenomenon itself which provoked it. Before attempting that, however, let us consider some answers which have already been made to the question.

2. *The Mythical View.* — The naïve thinker tries to account for things in a peculiar manner. He regards natural phenomena as the expression of hidden, mysterious forces. He collects a number of similar occurrences and conceives them as the

raphy of the History of Philosophy, see my translation of Weber's *History of Philosophy*, notes in § 3. For special bibliographies see the notes on particular philosophers in *Weber* and *Paulsen*. The beginner will find the works of Paulsen, Seth, Wundt, Sidgwick, and Hyslop most helpful to him in his study of the history of ethics and ethical conceptions.

manifestation of some supernatural principle. Thus rain and thunder are produced by rain and thunder gods, disease by a god of disease. The same tendency impels him to explain the fact of moral consciousness by referring it to supernatural powers. He notices a conflict in himself between two tendencies, the one urging him in the direction of the good, the other in the direction of the evil. Behind each he places an entity, a principle, of which the different occurrences are the expressions. Conscience, he says, is the voice of God in the human soul; it is God directly speaking to us; it is something distinct from the person, something from without that tells him which way to go. Greek mythology personifies the pangs of conscience in the form of the Erinyes or Furies, who pursue the evil-doer as long as he lives; and even Socrates speaks of the dæmon within him who warns him against certain lines of conduct and urges him in the direction of the good.[1] And just as the naïve consciousness places an entity behind the inner tendency toward the right, so it makes an entity of the inner tendency toward the evil. The latter is called the principle of evil or the devil, who tempts man to do wrong.

3. *The Rationalistic Intuitionists.* — The mythological view, as we might call it, is superseded by the metaphysical view, which appears in many forms, often in combination with the preceding.

[1] See Schmidt, *Ethik der Griechen;* Gass, *Die Lehre vom Gewissen.* See also Bender, *Mythologie und Metaphysik.*

Let us see how it answers our question. Why do we make moral distinctions? Because we have the power of making such judgments. Man possesses a natural faculty, a peculiar moral endowment, a conscience, which immediately enables him to distinguish between right and wrong. Its deliverances are absolutely certain and necessary, as self-evident as the truth that twice two is four, as immediate and eternal as the axioms of geometry. You cannot and need not prove that twice two is four, you cannot and need not prove that stealing is wrong. It is as absurd to doubt the one fact as it is to doubt the other. And whence did man obtain this wonderful power, you ask? Well, it is an inborn faculty, which God has given us.

(1) Let us consider a few representatives of this view,[1] and note how it is modified in the course of time. And, first, let us turn to the early Christian thinkers.[2] "How," Chrysostom[3] asks the heathen,[4] "did your lawgivers happen to give so many laws on murder, marriage, wills, etc.? The later ones have perhaps been taught by their predecessors, but how did these learn of them? How else than through conscience, the law which God originally implanted in human nature?" "There is in our souls," says Pelagius,[5]

[1] In the following expositions I have tried, as far as possible, to state the different authors' views in their own language.

[2] See Gass, *Die Lehre vom Gewissen.*

[3] Died 407. [4] *Adv. pop. Antioch.*, Homil. 12.

[5] A contemporary of St. Augustine.

"a certain natural holiness, as it were, which presides over the citadel of the mind, a judgment of good and evil."[1] Augustine[2] declares that there are "in the natural faculty of judgment certain rules and seeds of virtue, which are both true and incommunicable."

But, it might be asked, if there is such an absolute faculty, if the dictates of this conscience or the moral truths engraven on the mind are so certain and universal, how comes it that so many mistakes are made, and so many differences exist in action? In obeying the so-called inner voice the individual may still fall into error. To escape this troublesome problem the Schoolmen modified the view just set forth in an ingenious way. I may pronounce judgment that a particular act is right or wrong. The faculty which enables me to do this is the conscience (conscientia, *συνείδησις*). The judgment may be false, for the particular act which it pronounces to be right or wrong may be the opposite. But I have another faculty, the faculty which tells me in general that all wrong must be avoided, that evil must not be done. This faculty, called the synteresis or synderesis (*συνδέρεσις*),[3] cannot err, it is infallible, inextinguishable. It is the spark of reason or truth which burns even in the souls of the damned. When we come to apply this truth to particular

[1] *Epist. ad Demetr.*, chap. iv, p. 25. [2] 354–430.

[3] The spelling and derivation of the word are in dispute. See *Archiv f. G. d. Ph.*, Vol. X, number 4.

cases and seek to discover what particular deeds should be avoided, we exercise the conscience and may err. To quote from Bonaventura:[1] "For God has endowed us with a twofold righteousness, one for judging correctly, and this is the righteousness of conscience, and one for willing correctly, and that is the righteousness of the synderesis, whose function it is to warn against (*remurmurare*) the evil and to prompt to goodness."[2] Antoninus of Florence[3] regards the synderesis as a natural habit or endowment, a natural light, which tends to keep man from doing wrong by warning him against sin and inclining him to the good.[4] It is a simple principle, dealing with general laws, sinless and inextinguishable, while the conscience is a faculty or an activity which concerns itself with the particular and is, therefore, subject to error and illusion. "The human mind makes a certain syllogism, as it were, for which the synderesis furnishes the major premise: All evil is to be avoided. But a superior reason assumes the minor premise of this syllogism, saying, Adultery is an evil because it is prohibited by God, while an inferior reason says, Adultery is

[1] 1221–1274. *Breviloquium*, Part II, chap. ii.

[2] Duplicem enim indidit (Deus) rectitudinem ipsi naturæ, videlicet unam ad recte judicandum, et hæc est rectitudo conscientiæ; aliam, ad recte volendum, et hæc est rectitudo synderesis, cujus est remurmurare contra malum et stimulare ad bonum.

[3] 1389–1459.

[4] Synderesis est quidam connaturalis habitus sive connaturale lumen, cujus actus vel officium est, hominem retrahere a malo murmurando contra peccatum et inclinare ad bonum.

an evil because it is unjust, or because it is dishonest. But conscience draws the conclusion from the above premises: Therefore adultery is to be avoided."[1]

(2) We find similar views expressed by modern thinkers. Ralph Cudworth[2] regards knowledge as the product of an independent activity of the soul, or reason. "The intellection consists in the application of a given pattern thought, a ready-made category, to the phenomena and objects presented by experience. These categories or notions are *a priori;* they are the constant reflections of the Universal Reason, of God's mind." But they are not merely objects and products of the intellect, they form the nature or essence of things. All men have the same fundamental ideas. What is clearly and distinctly perceived is true. Among the truths which reason reveals to us are moral truths, which, like mathematical propositions, are absolute and eternal. But the soul is not a mere passive and receptive thing which has no innate active principles of its own. Good and evil, intuitive intellectual

[1] Fit in animo vel in mente hominis quasi quidam syllogismus, cujus majorem præmittit synderesis dicens, omne malum esse vitandum. Minorem vero hujus syllogismi assumit ratio superior, dicens adulterium esse malum, quia prohibitum est a Deo, ratio vero inferior dicit, adulterium esse malum, quia vel est injustum vel quia est inhonestum. Conscientia vero infert conclusionem dicens et concludens ex supradictis, ergo adulterium est vitandum.

[2] 1617–1688. The title of Cudworth's book is characteristic of his standpoint: *Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality.* — Selections in Selby-Bigge's *British Moralists*, Vol. II.

categories, convey more than knowledge, and are attended by an authority pleading with the will to move in a determinate direction. Moreover, the truths of mathematics and morals are as binding on God as they are on us; he must think and act like all rational beings.[1]

(3) Samuel Clarke[2] teaches that there are eternal and necessary differences and relations of things. The human differences are as obvious as the various sizes of physical objects, the fitness of actions and characters as obvious as the propositions of numbers and geometrical figures. Hence the moral truths, like the mathematical truths, belong to the sphere of eternal relations. The reason, divine and human, perceives these eternal differences and relations as they are. And just as no one can refuse assent to a correct mathematical proof, no one who understands the subject can refuse assent to moral propositions. "So far as men are conscious of what is right and wrong, so far they are under obligation to act accordingly."[3] It is contrary to reason, contrary to the eternal order of nature, to do wrong. Indeed, it is as absurd as to try to make darkness out of light, sweet out of bitter. To deny that I should do for another what he in the like case

[1] For Cudworth, see especially Martineau, *Types*, Vol. II, Bk. II; Jodl, *Geschichte der Ethik;* Sidgwick, *History of Ethics.*

[2] 1675–1729. *Discourse concerning the Unalterable Obligations of Natural Religion.* — Selections from Clarke's ethical writings in Selby-Bigge's *British Moralists*, Vol. II.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 184 ff.

should do for me, and to deny it, "either in word or in action," "is as if a man should contend that, though two and three are equal to five, yet five are not equal to two and three." God himself necessarily conforms his will to the laws of morals; his activity must be in accord with eternal right.[1]

(4) Henry Calderwood[2] belongs to the same school. We have, he says, an intuitive knowledge of the right and wrong. This knowledge is immediate, and its *source* is within the mind itself. "By direct insight a law is visible to us which cannot be inferred, but which regulates all inferences in morals within the area to which the law applies." The recognition of a general truth or principle of conduct is perception or intuition of the highest order. The power to recognize self-evident truth has been named Reason. Conscience, then, is that power by which moral law is immediately recognized, "it is reason discovering universal truth having the authority of sovereign moral law, and affording the basis for personal obligation." It is a cognitive or intellectual power, not a form of feeling, nor a combination of feelings; and it is vested with sovereign practical authority. This authority is found in the character of the truth which conscience reveals, not in the nature of the faculty itself. "This faculty is a power of sight, making a perception of self-evident truth possible to

[1] See references under Cudworth; also Stephen, *op. cit.*, Vol. II.

[2] 1831–1897. *Handbook of Moral Philosophy.*

man; but it contributes nothing to the truth perceived. To this truth itself belongs inherent authority, by which is meant, absolute right to command, not force to constrain."[1]

But if conscience discovers moral law to us, how is it that there exists such diversity of moral judgments among men? Calderwood maintains that there is a very general agreement as to the forms of rectitude, such as truthfulness, justice, benevolence. No nation places these virtues in the list of moral wrongs. But men differ as to the application of these principles.

Conscience cannot be educated. As well teach the eye to see, and the ear to hear, as to teach reason to perceive self-evident truth. But conscience can be trained in the application of the law, which can be known only through personal experience.

The foregoing thinkers practically agree in the answers which they give to our question, Why do men make moral judgments? Men judge as they do because they have an innate knowledge of morality, a knowledge not derived from experience, but inherent in the very nature of human reason. Reason immediately reveals to us moral truths, certain universal propositions which are as necessary and absolute as the truths of mathematics. Conscience is an intuition of the reason (*ratio*). We may call

[1] *Handbook*, Part I, chaps. iii and iv. To the same school belong Price, Reid, Stewart, Janet, Porter, and others.

the philosophers who adopt this view, rationalists or intellectualists, *rationalistic intuitionists*.

4. *The Emotional Intuitionists.* — There are other philosophers who agree with the above that conscience is innate, but do not conceive it as a faculty of *reason*, as a faculty that pronounces universal and necessary judgments, like, Stealing is wrong, Benevolence is right. According to them we either *feel* or *perceive* that a particular act or motive is right or wrong when it is presented to us. We contemplate motives and acts, and pronounce judgment upon them when they are brought before consciousness, and we do this because we immediately and intuitively feel or perceive them to be right or wrong, not because we first compare them with an universal innate truth or proposition, delivered by the reason. — Let us consider the advocates of this view under two heads. Let us call those who regard conscience as a form of *feeling*, as an *emotional* faculty, *emotional* intuitionists; and those who base it upon *perception*, *perceptional* intuitionists.[1]

[1] Neither Shaftesbury nor Hutcheson draws a sharp distinction between feeling and perception, both using the terms interchangeably; but they seem to me to incline toward the view that the moral sense is an emotional faculty. (See Martineau, *Types*, Vol. II, Bk. II, pp. 524 ff., where their meaning of the word *sense* is defined.) Hume is clearer in his statements on this point, and more outspoken in his opposition to the rationalists. Butler and Martineau, on the other hand, regard conscience as a cognitive faculty, but not in the sense of the rationalists. With them it is a perception rather than a power of reason proclaiming general moral truths.

(1) According to Lord Shaftesbury,[1] man possesses "self-affections which lead only to the good of the private," "natural, kind, or social affections," which lead to the public good, and "unnatural affections" which lead neither to public nor private good. Virtue consists in eliminating the latter, and establishing a proper harmony or balance between the others. But how can we tell whether these affections are properly balanced or not? By means of the *moral sense*, the sense of right and wrong, a natural possession of all rational creatures, which "no speculative opinion is capable immediately and directly to exclude or destroy." "In a creature capable of forming general notions of things," he says, "not only the outward beings which offer themselves to the sense are the objects of affection, but the very affections themselves; and the affections of pity, kindness, gratitude, and their contraries, being brought before the mind by reflection, become objects, so that by means of this reflected sense there arises another kind of affection toward those very affections themselves which have been already felt, and are now become the subject of a new liking or dislike."[2] "No sooner are actions viewed, no sooner the human affections and passions

[1] 1671–1713. "Inquiry concerning Virtue and Merit," contained in the second volume of the *Characteristics*. See especially Martineau; Stephen; Jodl; Gizycki, *Die Philosophie Shaftesbury's;* Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*. — Selections in Selby-Bigge, *British Moralists,* Vol. I. [2] *Inquiry*, Bk. I, Part II, Section III.

discerned (and they are most of them discerned as soon as felt), than straight an inward eye distinguishes and sees the fair and shapely, the amiable, the admirable, the foul, the odious, or the despicable. How is it possible, then, not to own that as these distinctions have their foundation in nature, the discernment itself is natural and from nature alone?"[1]

(2) Francis Hutcheson[2] follows in the same path. He regards man as being moved by two kinds of affections: self-love and benevolence. In case a conflict arises between these two motive principles, an internal principle, intuitive and universal in man, the *moral sense*, appears and decides in favor of the latter. The moral sense has always "approved of every kind affection," has pronounced "morally good" all actions which flow from benevolent affection, or intention of absolute good to others. What is the nature of this faculty? It does not, like the conscience of the rationalists, evolve general propositions out of itself, but perceives virtue and vice as the eye perceives light and darkness.[3] It is a "regulating and controlling function," "the faculty of per-

[1] *The Moralists*, Part III, Section III. As Jodl says: "The manner in which Shaftesbury speaks of this self-reflection upon which the moral judgment is said to depend, is somewhat indefinite and vacillating." Still, he apparently means to point out that an emotional element enters into the process by which such judgments are formed. We may, therefore, call Shaftesbury an "emotional intuitionist."

[2] 1694–1747. *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, etc. — Selections from Hutcheson's writings in Selby-Bigge, *op. cit.*, Vol. I.

[3] *Inquiry*, Section I, § 8; *System of Moral Philosophy*, Bk I.

ceiving moral excellence."[1] "Some actions have to men an immediate goodness;" "by a superior sense, which I call a moral one, we perceive pleasure in the contemplation of such actions in others, and are determined to love the agent (and much more do we perceive pleasure in being conscious of having done such actions ourselves) without any view of further natural advantage from them."[2]

(3) David Hume[3] agrees with Hutcheson. He discusses the question "whether 'tis by means of our ideas [reason] or impressions [feelings] we distinguish between vice and virtue, and pronounce an action blamable or praiseworthy,"[4] and finds that reason as such is wholly inactive and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience, or a sense of morals. Vice and virtue are not discoverable merely by reason, or the comparison of ideas. Our decisions concerning moral rectitude and depravity are *perceptions*.

[1] *System*, Bk. I.

[2] *Inquiry*, Introduction. See especially Martineau, *Types*, Vol. II, Bk. II.

[3] 1711–1776. *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, etc. For bibliography see Weber, *History of Philosophy*, 417, note.

[4] *Treatise on Morals*, Bk. III, Part I, § 1; *Inquiry*, Section I: "There has been a controversy started of late concerning the general foundation of morals: whether they be derived from reason or from sentiment; whether we attain the knowledge of them by a chain of argument and induction, or by an immediate feeling and finer internal sense; whether, like all sound judgment of truth and falsehood, they should be the same to every rational, intelligent being; or whether, like the perception of beauty and deformity, they be founded entirely on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species." — *Selections* by Hyslop.

Morality is more *properly felt, than judged of;* though this feeling or sentiment is commonly so soft and gentle that we are apt to confound it with an idea.[1] "The final sentence, it is probable, which pronounces characters and actions amiable or odious, blamable or praiseworthy; that which stamps on them the mark of honor or infamy, approbation or censure; that which renders morality an active principle, and constitutes virtue our happiness, and vice our misery: it is probable, I say, that this final sentence depends on some internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal in the whole species."[2] And what is the nature of the feeling by which we know good and evil? To have the

[1] *Treatise on Morals*, Bk. III, Part I, § 2.

[2] *Inquiry*, Section I. See also Appendix I: "Now, as virtue is an end, and is desirable on its own account, without fee or reward, merely for the immediate satisfaction which it conveys, it is requisite that there should be some sentiment which it touches; some internal taste, or feeling, or whatever you choose to call it, which distinguishes moral good and evil, and which embraces the one and rejects the other. Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and of *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood, the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution, the other has a productive faculty, and, gilding or staining all natural objects with the colors borrowed from internal sentiment, raises, in a manner, a new creation. Reason, being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, and directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination, by showing us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding misery. Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action, and is the first spring or impulse to desire and volition."

sense of virtue is nothing but to *feel* a particular kind of satisfaction, a peculiar kind of pleasure.[1]

(4) To the same school belong also J. J. Rousseau,[2] Kant[3] (before the critical period), Adam Smith,[4] and J. F. Herbart.[5] F. Brentano has attempted to strengthen the theory in a peculiar manner.[6] There are, he holds, certain self-evident judgments, which carry their self-evidence in them, which it would be absurd to deny, like, Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other; and certain instinctive or blind judgments, which may or may not be true, about which there can be dispute. Similarly, there are certain higher or self-evident feelings, feelings which are valid for all human beings, feelings about which there can be no dispute, and lower feelings, which lack this self-evident character, about which there can be dispute. Thus we love knowledge and truth, and dislike error and ignorance, and there can be no dispute about the value of this feeling. Should a different human species love error and hate truth, we should regard its loving and hating as fundamentally wrong. That a man should love knowledge and hate ignorance is self-evident; that he should prefer champagne to Rhine-wine is

[1] See *Treatise, loc. cit.*, Section II; also Part III.

[2] 1712–1778.

[3] See his *Ueber die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und Moral*, 1764. Cf. Förster, *Der Entwicklungsgang der Kantischen Ethik;* Jodl, *Geschichte der Ethik.*

[4] 1723–1790. *A Theory of Moral Sentiments.* [5] 1776–1841.

[6] Born 1838. *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntniss*, 1889.

not self-evident. In other words, we have an innate feeling of preference for the good.[1]

5. *The Perceptional Intuitionists.* — In this class belong Bishop Butler, James Martineau, and W. E. H. Lecky. With them conscience is intuitive, but neither a feeling, as the foregoing thinkers declare, nor the product of reason in the Cudworthian sense, but an inner perception.

(1) According to Butler,[2] there is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them, and pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust; which without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly. It is by this faculty, natural to man, that he is a moral agent, that he is a law to himself, but this faculty, not to be considered merely as a principle in his heart, which is to have some influence as well as others, but considered as a faculty in kind and in nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own authority of being so. You cannot form a notion of this faculty, con-

[1] Hermann Schwarz, *Grundzüge der Ethik*, is an emotional intuitionist of the Hutcheson stamp. We feel intuitively the worth of sympathy to be higher than that of selfishness.

[2] 1692–1752. *Sermons upon Human Nature.* See also *Dissertation upon Virtue.* Works edited by Gladstone, 1897. Selections in Selby-Bigge, *British Moralists*, Vol. I. See Collins, *Butler.*

science, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea, that is, of the faculty itself, and to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it had right, had it power as it had manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world. "What obligations are we under to attend to and follow it? — Your obligation to obey this law is its being the law of your nature. That your conscience approves of and attests to such a course of action is itself alone an obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide, the guide assigned us by the author of our nature," etc.[1] "The whole moral law is as much matter of revealed command, as positive institutions are, for the Scripture enjoins every moral virtue. In this respect, then, they are both upon a level. But the moral law is moreover written upon our hearts, interwoven into our very nature. And this is a plain intimation of the author of it, which is to be preferred when they interfere."[2]

(2) Martineau's[3] modification of the intuitional theory is unique. On the simple testimony of our perceptive faculty, he says, we believe in the perceived object and the perceiving self. "This dual conviction rests upon the axiom that we must ac-

[1] Sermon iii. [2] *Analogy of Religion*, Part II, chap. i.
[3] 1805–1900. *Types of Ethical Theory.*

cept as veracious the immediate depositions of our faculties, and that the postulates, without which the mind cannot exert its activity at all, possess the highest certainty." We ask no more than this on behalf of our ethical psychology. Let perception be dictator among the objects of sense ; conscience, as to the conditions of duty.[1]

Now we have an irresistible tendency to approve and disapprove, to pass judgments of right and wrong. We judge persons, not things, and we judge always the inner spring of action.[2] Hence, we judge first ourselves, then others. We could not judge other men's actions if what they signified were not already familiar to us by our own inner experience. But we cannot judge an inner spring of action if it is the only thing in consciousness. A plurality of inner principles is an indispensable condition of moral judgment.[3] There must be several impulses (incompatible impulses) present. Without them the moral consciousness would sleep. As soon as this condition is realized, "we are sensible of a contrast between them other than of mere intensity or of qualitative variety — not analogous to the difference between loud and soft, or between red and bitter, — but requiring quite a separate phraseology for its expression, such as this : that one is *higher*, *worthier*, than the other, and in comparison with it has the clear *right to us*.

[1] *Types*, Vol. II, Part II, Introduction.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 18 ff.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 37.

This apprehension is no mediate discovery of ours, of which we can give an account, but is immediately inherent in the very experience of the principles themselves — a revelation inseparable from their appearance side by side."[1] It is unique and unanalyzable.

"The whole ground of ethical procedure consists in this: that we are sensible of a *graduated scale of excellence* among our natural principles, quite distinct from the order of their intensity and irrespective of the range of their external effects." The sensibility of the mind to the gradations of the scale is *conscience*, the *knowledge with oneself* of the better and the worse.[2] It is the critical perception we have of the relative authority of our own several principles of action. All moral discrimination has its native seat in conscience; we first feel differences in our own springs of action, and then apply this knowledge to the corresponding ones betrayed in others by their conduct.

But how comes it that men are not unanimous in their apparent moral judgments? This is easy to understand. "The whole scale of inner principles is open only to the survey of the ripest mind, and to be perfect in its appreciation is to have exhausted the permutations of human experience. To all actual men, a part only is familiar, often a deplorably small part. Still, however limited the range of our moral consciousness, it would lead us all to the

[1] *Types*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 44.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 53. See also p. 266, where Martineau gives a table of the springs of action in the ascending order of worth.

same verdicts had we all the same segment of the series under cognizance."[1]

Conscience speaks with authority. This authority is a simple feeling, admitting of little analysis or explanation.[2] But it is not simply subjective, not of my own making, not a mere self-assertion of my own will. How can that be a mere self-assertion of my own will, to which my own will is the first to bend in homage? "The authority which reveals itself within us reports itself, not only as underived from our will, but as independent of our idiosyncrasies altogether."[3] If the sense of authority means anything, it means the discernment of *something higher than we*, no mere part of ourself, but transcending our personality. It is more than part and parcel of myself, "it is the communion of God's life and guiding love entering and abiding with an apprehensive capacity in myself.[4] Here we encounter an objective authority without quitting our own centre of consciousness." A man is a "law unto himself," not by "autonomy of the individual" (as Green would say), but by "self-communication of the infinite spirit to the soul"; and the law itself, the idea of an absolute "should be," is authoritative with conscience, because it is a deliverance of the eternal perfection to a mind that has to grow, and is imposed, therefore, by the infinite upon the finite.[5]

[1] *Types*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 61. [2] *Ib.*, p. 99.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 102. [4] *Ib.*, p. 105.
[5] For Lecky's view, see the first chapter of his *History of European Morals*, especially pp. 55, 68 ff., 75, 120, 121 note, 122 ff.

The thinkers whom we have considered thus far are all intuitionists, either rational, emotional, or perceptional. According to them we have an innate knowledge of moral distinctions. The truths are either engraved on the mind, or revealed by a superior rational faculty ; or we *feel* or *perceive* immediately upon the presentation in consciousness of a certain motive or act that it is right or wrong. Conscience is an ultimate, original factor, not further to be explained, except perhaps by conceiving it as implanted in the soul of man by God.

6. *The Empiricists.* — But there is another school of moralists, which denies that the conscience is innate, and attempts to explain it as an acquisition,[1] as a product of experience. We have no special moral faculty which intuitively distinguishes between right and wrong. Our knowledge of morality is, like all other knowledge, acquired by experience. We may call the advocates of this view *empiricists* (from the Greek word ἐμπειρία, *empeiria*, experience).

(1) Thus Thomas Hobbes[2] says: "It is either science or opinion which we commonly mean by the word conscience ; for men say that such a thing is true in or upon their conscience; which they never do when

[1] Some of the later mediæval thinkers, like Duns Scotus and Occam, reject the view that we have an innate knowledge of morality, and hold that we know right and wrong simply because God reveals it to us in the Scriptures. See Lecky, *European Morals*, chap. i, p. 17.

[2] 1588–1679. Selections from Hobbes's ethical writings by Sneath, and in Selby-Bigge, *British Moralists*, Vol. II.

they think it doubtful, and therefore they know, or think they know it to be true. But men, when they say things upon their conscience, are not therefore presumed certainly to know the truth of what they say: it remaineth then that that word is used by them that have an opinion, not only of the truth of a thing, but also of their knowledge of it; to which the truth of the proposition is consequent. Conscience I therefore define to be *opinion of evidence*."[1] Again: "I conceive that when a man deliberates whether he shall do a thing or not do it, he does nothing else but consider whether it be better for himself to do it or not to do it."[2] "Moral philosophy is nothing else but the science of what is good and evil in the conversation and society of mankind. Good and evil are names, that signify our appetites and aversions, which in different tempers, customs, and doctrines of men are different, and divers men differ not only in their judgment on the senses of what is pleasant and unpleasant — but also of what is conformable or disagreeable to reason in the actions of common life."[3]

(2) With all this John Locke[4] practically agrees. He, too, rejects the teaching that there are innate ideas or truths, either "speculative" or "practical." Nature has put into man a desire of happiness and an aversion to misery, and these are natural tendencies

[1] *Human Nature*, chap. vi, § 8. [2] *On Liberty and Necessity.*
[3] *Leviathan*, chap. xv. See Lecky, *European Morals*, chap. i. For bibliography see Weber, *History of Philosophy*, p. 301 note.
[4] 1632–1704.

or practical principles which influence all our actions.[1] That which is apt to cause pleasure in us we call good, that which has an aptness to cause pain we call evil.[2] Now God has so arranged it that certain modes of conduct produce public happiness and preserve society, and also benefit the agent himself. Men discover these and accept them as rules of practice.[3] To these rules are annexed certain rewards and punishments, either by God (rewards and punishments of infinite weight and duration in another life) or by men (legal punishments, popular approbation or condemnation, loss of reputation), which are goods and evils not the natural product and consequence of the actions themselves.[4] Men then refer to these rules or laws, *i.e.*, the law of God, the law of politic society, the law of fashion or private censure, and compare their actions to them. They judge of the moral rectitude of their acts according as these agree or do not agree with the rules.[5] Moral good and evil, then, is only the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary action to some law, whereby good and evil is drawn on us by the will and power of the lawmaker.[6] Hence conscience is "nothing else but our opinion or judgment of the moral rectitude or pravity of our actions."[7]

[1] *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. I, chap. iii, § 3. See also the notes in Locke's *Common-Place Book*, published by Lord King.

[2] *Ib.*, Bk. II, chap. xx, § 2; chap. xxi, §§ 42 f.

[3] *Ib.*, Bk. II, chap. iii, § 6. [4] *Ib.*, Bk. II, chap. xxviii, §§ 6 ff.

[5] *Ib.*, § 13. [6] *Ib.*, § 5. [7] *Ib.*, Bk. I, chap. iii, § 8.

"Many men may come to assent to several moral rules and be convinced of their obligation in the same way in which they come to the knowledge of other things. Others may come to be of the same mind from their education, company, and customs of their country; which persuasion, however got, will serve to set conscience on work. Thus we make moral judgments without having any rules 'written on our hearts.' Some men with the same bent of conscience prosecute what others avoid."[1]

We may also reach a knowledge of morality by reasoning from certain first principles, which, however, are also derived from experience. Knowledge is the perception of the connection and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas.[2] When we perceive this agreement or disagreement of two ideas *immediately*, *i.e.*, without the intervention of any other, we have *intuitive* knowledge.[3] But when we need other ideas with which to compare our two ideas in order to discover their agreement or disagreement, we have *reasoning* or *demonstration*, and the knowledge thus acquired is called *demonstrative*.[4] But in order that we may reach certainty, there must be, in every step reason makes in demonstrative knowledge, an intuitive knowledge of the agreement or disagreement it seeks with the next intermediate idea; *i.e.*, every step in reason-

[1] *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. I, chap. iii, § 8.
[2] *Ib.*, Bk. IV, chap. i, §§ 2 ff.
[3] *Ib.*, chap. ii, § 1.
[4] *Ib.*, chap. ii, §§ 2 ff.

ing that produces knowledge must have intuitive certainty.[1]

Now morality is capable of demonstration as well as mathematics. For the precise real essence of the things for which moral words stand may be perfectly known, and so the congruity and incongruity of the things themselves may be certainly discovered, in which consists perfect knowledge.[2] All that is necessary is that men search after moral truths in the same method and with the same indifferency as they do mathematical truths.[3] "He that hath the idea of an intelligent, but frail and weak, being, made by and depending on another who is eternal, omnipotent, perfectly wise and good, will as certainly know that man is to honor, fear, and obey God, as that the sun shines when he sees it. For if he hath but the ideas of two such beings in his mind, and will turn his thoughts that way, he will as certainly find that the inferior, finite, and dependent is under an obligation to obey the supreme and infinite, as he is certain to find that three, four, and seven, are less than fifteen, if he will consider and compute those numbers; nor can he be surer in a clear morning that the sun is risen, if he but open his eyes, and turn them that way. But yet these truths, being ever so certain, ever so clear, he may be ignorant of

[1] *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. IV, chap. ii, § 7.

[2] *Ib.*, Bk. III, chap. xi, § 16. Cf. also Bk. IV, chap. iii, §§ 18, 20; chap. xii, § 8.

[3] *Ib.*, Bk. IV, chap. iii, § 20.

either, or all of them, who will never take the pains to employ his faculties, as he should to inform himself about them."[1] "The idea of a supreme Being, infinite in power, goodness, and wisdom, whose workmanship we are, and on whom we depend; and the idea of ourselves, as understanding rational beings; being such as are clear in us, would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued, afford such foundations of our duty and rules of action as might place morality among the sciences capable of demonstration: wherein I doubt not but from self-evident propositions by necessary consequences, as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measures of right and wrong might be made out to any one that will apply himself with the same indifferency and attention to the one as he does to the other of these sciences. The relation of other modes may certainly be perceived, as well as those of number and extension: and I cannot see why they should not also be capable of demonstration if due methods were thought on to examine or pursue their agreement or disagreement. Where there is no property there is no injustice, is a proposition as certain as any demonstration in Euclid: for the idea of property being the right to anything, and the idea to which the name injustice is given being the invasion or violation of that right, it is evident that these ideas being thus established, and these names annexed

[1] *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. IV, chap. xiv, § 4.

to them, I can as certainly know this proposition to be true; as that a triangle has three angles equal to two right ones. Again: No government allows absolute liberty; the idea of government being the establishment of certain rules or laws which require conformity to them, and the idea of absolute liberty being for any one to do whatever he pleases, I am as capable of being certain of the truth of this proposition as of any in mathematics."[1]

(3) The Frenchman, Helvétius,[2] does not materially differ from Hobbes and Locke. The moral sense is by no means innate;[3] indeed, everything except self-love, that is, the aversion to pain and the desire for pleasure, is acquired. "In all times and at all places, in matters of morals as well as in matters of mind, it is personal interest which governs the judgment of individuals; and general or public interest, which determines that of nations. . . . Every man has regard in his judgments, for nothing but his own interest."[4] Consequently, the only way to make him moral is to make him see his own welfare in the public welfare, and this can be done by legislation only, *i.e.*, by means of the proper rewards and punishments. Hence "the science of morals is nothing but the science of legislation."[5]

[1] *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. IV, chap. iii, § 18.

[2] 1715–1771. *De l'esprit; De l'homme.* Bibliography in *Weber.*

[3] *De l'homme*, Section V, chaps. iii, iv; Section II, chaps. vii, viii.

[4] *De l'esprit*, Discourse ii.

[5] *Ib.*, II, 17. Similar to the views of Helvétius are those

(4) Even the author of the *Evidences of Christianity*, William Paley,[1] denies the existence of a moral sense.[2] "Upon the whole," he says, "it seems to me, either that there exist no such instincts as compose what is called the moral sense [here Paley opposes Hume] or that they are not now to be distinguished from prejudices and habits; on which account they cannot be depended upon in moral reasoning," etc.[3] "Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness."[4] "We can be obliged to nothing but what we ourselves are to gain or lose something by: for nothing else can be a violent motive to us. As we should not be obliged to obey the laws of the magistrate, unless rewards and punishments, pleasure or pain, somehow or other, depended upon our obedience; so neither should we, without the same reason, be obliged to do what is right, to practise virtue, or to obey the commands of God."[5] The difference between an act of prudence and an act of duty is

of Mandeville (1670–1733, author of *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices made Public Benefits*), Lamettrie (1709–1751, author of *L'homme machine, Discours sur le bonheur*), and Holbach (1723–1789, author of *Système de la nature*). All these thinkers are materialists. See especially Lange, *History of Materialism;* Jodl, *Geschichte der Ethik;* Martineau, *Types*, Vol. II, pp. 312 ff.; Lecky, *Morals*, chap. i.

[1] 1743–1803.

[2] See his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy.*

[3] *Ib.*, Bk. I, chap. v.

[4] *Ib.*, Bk. I, chap. vii.

[5] *Ib.*, Bk. II, chap. ii.

that, "in the one case, we consider what we shall gain or lose in the present world: in the other case, we consider also what we shall gain or lose in the world to come."[1]

(5) Jeremy Bentham's[2] statements on this point are not more radical. He says: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do."[3] "Conscience is a thing of fictitious existence supposed to occupy a seat in the mind."[4] Conscience is the favorable or unfavorable *opinion* a man has of his own conduct, and has value only in so far as it conforms to the principle of utility. It is utterly useless to speak of duties, he declares; the word itself has something disagreeable and repulsive in it. While the moralist is speaking of duties, each man is thinking of his own interests.[5]

According to the philosophers whom we have just been considering, man is by birth a moral ignoramus who desires his own happiness. He comes in contact with fellows similarly endowed, and in order to live with them must obey certain rules. The

[1] *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, Bk. II, chap. iii.

[2] 1748–1842. See especially *Principles of Morals and Legislation.*

[3] *Principles of Morals*, etc., chap. i.

[4] *Deontology*, Vol. I, p. 137.

[5] For Bentham, see especially Lecky and Martineau, *op. cit.*

pains and pleasures annexed to these laws point out to him the course to pursue. Pleasure and pain are the great teachers of morality.

(6) But, it might be asked, how on this scheme can we explain the fact that men pronounce judgment upon acts without thinking about the pleasures and pains they produce? How does it happen that men love virtue for virtue's sake?

An ingenious theory, the so-called theory of association of ideas, is brought in to settle this difficulty.[1] David Hartley[2] attempts to show how the moral sense is formed in a purely mechanical way. Man is at first governed solely by his pleasures and pains. He soon learns to associate his pleasures with that which pleases him, and then loves this for its own sake. The infant connects the idea of its mother with the pleasure she procures it, and so comes to love her for her own sake. Money in itself possesses nothing that is admirable or pleasurable; it is a means of procuring objects of desire, and so becomes associated in our minds with the idea of pleasure. Hence the miser comes to love it for its own sake, and is willing to forego the things which the money procures rather than part with a fraction of his gold. In the same way the moral sentiments are formed. They procure for us many advantages which we love, and we gradually trans-

[1] We find the beginnings of this theory in Hobbes, Locke, Hutcheson, Gay, and Tucker. See *Lecky*, Vol. I, pp. 22 ff.

[2] 1705–1757. *Observations on Man.*

fer our affections from these to the things which procure them, and love virtue for virtue's sake.[1]

(7) The most careful and detailed explanation of the moral faculty from this standpoint is given by Alexander Bain.[2] According to him, conscience is an imitation within ourselves of the government without us. The first lesson that the child learns as a moral agent is obedience. "The child's susceptibility to pleasure and pain is made use of to bring about this obedience, and a mental association is rapidly formed between disobedience and apprehended pain, more or less magnified by fear." Forbidden actions arouse a certain dread; the fear of encountering pain is conscience in its earliest germ. The sentiment of love or respect toward persons in authority infuses a different species of dread, the dread of giving pain to a beloved object. Later on, the child learns to appreciate the reasons or motives that led to the imposition of the rules of conduct. "When the young mind is able to take notice of the use and meaning of the prohibitions imposed upon it, and to approve of the end intended by them, a new motive is added, and the conscience is then a triple compound, and begirds the action in

[1] *On Man*, Vol. I, pp. 473–475; Vol. II, 338 f. See *Lecky*, Vol. I, pp. 22 ff., 67 note; Ribot, *La psychologie anglaise contemporaine.* This view is developed by James Mill (*Analysis of the Human Mind*, Vol. II), and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), *Utilitarianism*, especially pp. 40–42, 44, 45, 46, 53 ff.

[2] Born 1818. *The Emotions and the Will; Mental and Moral Science.*

question with a threefold fear; the last ingredient being paramount in the maturity of the sympathies and the reason. All that we understand by the authority of conscience, the sentiment of obligation, the feeling of right, the sting of remorse, — can be nothing else than so many modes of expressing the acquired aversion and dread toward actions associated in the mind with the consequences now stated."

But there may not be present to a man's mind any of these motives, namely, the fear of retribution, or the respect to the authority commanding, affection or sympathy toward the persons or interests for whose sake the duty is imposed, his own advantage indirectly concerned, his religious feeling, his individual sentiments in accord with the spirit of the precept, or the infection of example. "Just as in the love of money for its own sake, one may come to form a habit of acting in a particular way, although the special impulses that were the original moving causes no longer recur to the mind." Here we have a case of the sense of duty in the abstract. This does not prove, however, that there exists a primitive sentiment of duty in the abstract, any more than the conduct of the miser proves that we are born with the love of gold in the abstract. "It is the tendency of association to erect new centres of force, detached from the particulars that originally gave them meaning; which new creations will sometimes assemble round themselves a more powerful body of

sentiment than could be inspired by any one of the constituent realities."[1]

We have examined the extreme rationalistic and empiristic views of conscience. According to one school, conscience is a natural endowment of man; the moral truths are inherent in his very nature; his soul is a tablet with moral laws written upon it. According to the other, conscience is not original, but acquired in the life of the individual. The soul is at birth an empty tablet, having no moral truths written upon it.

7. *Reconciliation of Intuitionism and Empiricism.* — Let us now consider some attempts that have been made to reconcile this opposition. Kant approaches the problem from the rationalistic side, Spencer from the empiristic.[2] Kant repudiates the extreme rationalistic thesis that we have an innate knowledge of *particular* moral truths, and regards as the *a priori* element the category of obligation, a general moral form whose content is filled by experience.[3] Spencer, on the other hand, concedes the

[1] *Emotions*, 3d ed., chap. xv, §§ 18 ff.; *The Will*, chap. x, especially §§ 8 ff.; also chapter on "Moral Faculty," in *Mental and Moral Science*. For criticism of Bain, see Calderwood, *Handbook*, Part. I, Div. II, chap. iii.

[2] It is worthy of note that both of these philosophers were at one time believers in the moral-sense doctrine of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. See p. 41, note 3, and Spencer's first edition of the *Social Statics*.

[3] His theory reminds one of the mediæval conception of the synderesis.

presence of an *a priori* element, and denies that the conscience is merely an acquisition of individual experience. Let us examine the views of these thinkers a little more in detail.

(1) In his *Kritik of Pure Reason* Immanuel Kant[1] asks the question, How is knowledge possible, or how is it possible that man can make synthetic judgments *a priori?* Experience furnishes us with only a limited number of cases; it cannot give us universality and necessity. Are these universal and necessary truths innate, as old rationalism asserted? Not exactly, Kant answers. The mind is endowed with certain functions or principles or forms or categories, which are not derived from experience, but are *prior* to experience, hence *a priori* or pure. Though we may not be conscious of them, they act in every rational creature. The senses furnish the mind with the raw materials, while the sensibility and the understanding, the two powers of the mind, arrange them according to the forms of space, time, causality, etc. Thus, for example, I see all things in space because my mind functions according to the space form. When I judge that heat expands bodies, I have ideas of heat, expansion, and bodies, elements ultimately furnished by sensation, and the idea that the heat is the cause of the expansion, the notion of

[1] 1729–1804. For Kant's ethics, see Cohen, *Kant's Begründung der Ethik;* Schurman, *Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Evolution;* Porter, *Kant's Ethics;* Paulsen, *Kant;* translation of Kant's ethical writings by Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics.*

causality, which is not derived from sensation, but which is a way my intellect has of looking at things. These forms or categories are, as it were, the colored glasses through which the theoretical reason views the world.[1]

However, we approach the world not merely from the theoretical standpoint, but from the practical or moral standpoint; we say not only what *is*, but what *ought to be*. The reason not only arranges its phenomena in space, time, and according to the causal law, but also commands that they be arranged according to the moral law. Its commands are unconditional, absolute, or *categorical imperatives;* it speaks with authority: Thou shalt, Thou shalt not. "The theoretical use of reason is that by which I know *a priori* (as necessary) that something is, while the practical use of reason is that by which I know *a priori* what ought to be." I assume that there really exist pure moral laws, which determine completely *a priori* the conduct of every rational creature. I can with justice presuppose the proposition because I can appeal not only to the proofs of the most enlightened moralists, but also to the moral judgment of every human being.[2]

Now the question is, How is all this possible? Knowledge is possible, as we have seen, because of

[1] For Kant's theory of knowledge, see the histories of philosophy, *e.g.*, *Weber*, where a bibliography is found.

[2] *Kritik of Pure Reason*, Max Müller's translation, pp. 510, 647. See also Abbott's translation of the ethical writings, pp. 28, 97 f., 119, 136.

certain innate or *a priori* forms or conditions which make it necessary for the mind to function as it functions. But how is morality possible? Are the different imperatives or moral laws innate, as Cudworth and men of his ilk would assert? No, says Kant, not exactly. But there is present in the *practical* reason a formal principle or condition, a form or category of obligation or *oughtness*, not derived from experience, but prior to it, *a priori*, a universally valid law, by virtue of which man is a moral being.[1] And, what does this categorical imperative enjoin? we ask. Kant answers, "Act so that the maxim of thy will can always at the same time hold good as a principle of universal legislation."[2] That is, do not perform acts of which thou canst not will that they become universal. The deceiver cannot will that lying should become a universal law, for with such a law there would be no promises at all; and his maxim would necessarily destroy itself. This law or maxim is valid for all rational creatures generally, not only under certain contingent conditions, but *with absolute necessity*. Although common men do not conceive it in such an abstract and universal form, yet they always really have it before their eyes, and use it as the standard of their decision.[3]

[1] See Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, p. 28.

[2] *Ib.*, pp. 17 ff., 38 ff.

[3] *Ib.*, pp. 20, 21, 93, 120 note, 192, 311, 321, 343. "Man (even the worst) does not in any maxim, as it were, rebelliously abandon the moral law (and renounce obedience to it). On the

There is, then, a moral imperative inherent in the very nature of man, which categorically commands. But the question is, Whence does it come? Is it the voice of a suprasensible being speaking in the heart of man? In a certain sense, yes. It is the product of the free will, of the intelligible ego, of the thing-in-itself.[1] "Freedom is the *ratio essendi* of the moral law," that is, the free will imposes the law upon itself; and the moral law is "the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom," that is, we must logically conclude from the fact that there is a categorical imperative in us, that there is a free will which imposes it.[2] "The question, then, how a categorical imperative is possible, can be answered to this extent, that we can assign the only hypothesis on which it is possible, namely, the idea of freedom; and we can also discern the necessity of this hypothesis, and this is sufficient for the *practical exercise* of reason, that is, for the conviction of the *validity of this imperative*, and hence of the moral law: but how this hypothesis itself is possible can never be discerned by any human reason."[3]

contrary, this forces itself upon him irresistibly by virtue of his moral nature, and if no other spring opposed it, he would also adopt it into his ultimate maxim as the adequate determining principle of his elective will, — that is, he would be morally good."

[1] Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 65 ff. Green: "It is the very essence of moral duty to be imposed by man upon himself."

[2] "I can because I must."

[3] *Ib.*, p. 81. See also p. 84: "It is, therefore, no fault in our deduction of the supreme principle of morality, but an objection

(2) Although Charles Darwin[1] did not work out a complete system of ethics, it will be interesting to examine his view of conscience before taking up Spencer's theory. Darwin bases our entire moral nature upon the social impulse or sympathy.[2] He regards it as highly probable that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being herein included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well or nearly as well developed as in man. Let us imagine that the animal has certain self-regarding instincts, *e.g.*, the desire to satisfy hunger or any passion such as vengeance, and social instincts, which lead it to take pleasure in the society of its fellows and to feel for them and to perform services for them. Such selfish instincts, though strong, are temporary, and can, for a time, be fully satisfied. With animals, however, which live permanently in a body, the social instincts are ever present and persistent. Now suppose that an enduring and always

that should be made to human reason in general that it cannot enable us to conceive the absolute necessity of an unconditional practical law such as the categorical imperative must be." To the Kantian school belong, T. H. Green (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, 1883), Muirhead (*Elements of Ethics*), J. S. Mackenzie (*Manual of Ethics*), J. Seth (*A Study of Ethical Principles*), and D'Arcy (*A Short Study of Ethics*).

[1] 1808–1882. For exposition and criticism, see Schurman, *Ethical Import of Darwinism;* Sully, *Sensation and Intuition*, pp. 17, 18; Martineau, *Types;* Williams, *Evolutional Ethics;* Guyau, *La morale anglaise contemporaine.*

[2] See his *Descent of Man*, chap. iv.

present social instinct has yielded to one of these other instincts which was stronger at the time, but did not endure nor leave behind it a very vivid impression (like hunger). And suppose the animal has the power of memory. It will remember its past actions and motives, and feel dissatisfaction or even misery because an enduring instinct was not satisfied.[1]

On the same principle we may explain why man feels that he ought to obey one instinctive desire rather than another; why he is bitterly regretful if he has yielded to a strong sense of self-preservation, and has not risked his life to save that of a fellow-creature, or why he regrets having stolen food from hunger.[2] Man reflects and so cannot help remembering the past. He will be driven to make a comparison between the impression of past hunger, vengeance satisfied, etc., and the ever present instinct of sympathy, and his early knowledge of what others consider as blamable or praiseworthy. "This knowledge cannot be banished from his mind, and from instinctive sympathy is esteemed of great moment. He will feel as if he had been balked in following a present instinct or habit, and this with

[1] *The Descent of Man*, pp. 98 ff. Darwin finds "something very like a conscience" in dogs. Thus, "a struggle may often be observed in animals between different instincts, or between an instinct and some habitual disposition, as when a dog rushes after a hare, is rebuked, pauses, hesitates, pursues again, or returns ashamed to his master; or as between the love of a female dog for her young puppies and her master, — for she may be seen to slink away to them, as if half ashamed of not accompanying her master." p. 107.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 110.

all animals causes dissatisfaction and even misery." He will then feel remorse, repentance, regret, or shame. "He will consequently resolve, more or less firmly, to act differently for the future; and this is conscience; for conscience looks backwards, and serves as a guide to the future."[1] Prompted by his conscience man will become habituated to self-command, so that his desires and passions will yield instantly to his social instincts. It is possible that the habit of self-command may, like other habits, be inherited. "Thus at last man comes to feel, through acquired and perhaps inherited habit, that it is best for him to obey his more persistent impulses. The imperious word *ought* seems merely to imply the consciousness of the existence of a rule of conduct, however it may have originated."[2]

(3) According to Herbert Spencer[3] the essential trait in the moral consciousness is the control of some feeling or feelings by some other feeling or feelings. In the rudest groups of society, the leading check to the immediate satisfaction of desires is the fear of the anger of fellow-savages. When special strength, skill, or courage makes one of them a leader in battle, he inspires the most fear, and there comes to be a more decided check than before.

[1] *The Descent of Man*, pp. 113 f.

[2] See also the interesting passage on p. 124, which I have quoted in chap. iii, § 9, of this book. A. Sutherland has developed Darwin's theory in his able work, *The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct*, 2 vols., 1898.

[3] Born 1820. *Principles of Ethics.*

As chieftainship is established, aggression upon and disobedience to the leader are regarded as greater evils still. That is, *political* control begins to differentiate from the more indefinite control of *mutual dread*. Meanwhile there has been developing the ghost-theory. The double of a deceased man is conceived as able to injure the survivors. Now there grows up another kind of check on immediate satisfaction of the desires — a check constituted by ideas of the evils which ghosts may inflict if offended; and when political headship gets settled, and the ghosts of dead chiefs are especially dreaded, there begins to take shape the form of restraint distinguished as *religious*. These three differentiated forms of control, while enforcing kindred restraints and incentives, also enforce one another. All of them involve the sacrifice of immediate special benefits for the sake of more distant and general benefits.

But joint aggressions upon men outside of the society cannot prosper if there are many aggressions within the society. Gradually, as the power of the ruler becomes greater, he forbids the aggressions and inflicts punishments for disobedience. Presently, political restraints of this class are enforced by religious restraints. Dread of the ghost of the dead chief tends to produce regard for the commands he habitually gave, and they eventually acquire sacredness. With further social evolution come further interdicts, until eventually there grows up a body of civil laws, the breach of which is also

disapproved by the society and looked upon as displeasing to the gods.

These three controls, political, religious, and social, however, do not constitute the *moral* control, but are only preparatory to it. The moral restraints refer not to the extrinsic effects of actions, but to their intrinsic effects, not to the incidental, collateral, non-necessary consequences of the acts, but to the consequences which the acts naturally produce. "The truly moral deterrent from murder is not constituted by a representation of hanging as a consequence, or by a representation of the tortures of hell as a consequence, or by a representation of the horror and hatred excited in fellow-men; but by a representation of the necessary natural results — the infliction of death-agony on the victim, the destruction of all his possibilities of happiness, the entailed sufferings to his belongings." "Only after political, religious, and social restraints have produced a stable community, can there be sufficient experience of the pains, positive and negative, sensational and emotional, which crimes of aggression cause, as to generate that moral aversion to them constituted by consciousness of their intrinsically evil results."

But I do not always fear the social, political, and religious punishments when I contemplate a certain act, nor do I think of the immediate consequences which it has upon others. I simply feel that the act ought not to be done, I feel its authoritative-

ness and its obligation without considering any of these effects at all. Now the question arises, How does there arise this feeling of moral obligation in general? It is an abstract sentiment generated in a manner analogous to that in which abstract ideas are generated. "Accumulated experiences have produced the consciousness that guidance by feelings which refer to remote and general results is usually more conducive to welfare than guidance by feelings to be immediately gratified." The idea of authoritativeness has come to be connected with feelings having these traits. This idea of authoritativeness is one element in the abstract consciousness of duty. But there is another element — the element of coerciveness. The sense of coerciveness or compulsion which the consciousness of duty includes, and which the word obligation indicates, has been generated by fears of the political, social, and religious penalties. Now, this sense of coerciveness becomes directly connected with the above-mentioned moral feelings in this way. The political, social, and religious motives are mainly formed of represented future results (of penalties), and so is the moral restraining motive (of the intrinsic effects). Hence it happens "that the representations, having much in common, and often being aroused at the same time, the fear joined with the three sets becomes, by association, joined with the fourth. Thinking of the extrinsic effects of a forbidden act excites a dread which continues present while the

intrinsic effects of the act are thought of; and, being thus linked with these intrinsic effects, causes a vague sense of moral compulsion." [1]

Heredity plays an important part in the process. There have been, and still are, developing in the race certain fundamental moral intuitions. Though these moral intuitions are the result of accumulated experiences of utility, gradually organized and inherited, they have come to be quite independent of conscious experience. The experiences of utility organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race have been producing corresponding nervous modifications, which, by continued transmission and accumulation, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition — certain emotions responding to right and wrong conduct, which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility.[2]

[1] *Data of Ethics*, §§ 44 ff.

[2] *Ib.*, § 45. See Spencer's letter Mill, quoted in § 45 of the *Data of Ethics:* "To make my position fully understood, it seems needful to add that, corresponding to the fundamental propositions of a developed Moral Science, there have been, and still are, developing in the race, certain fundamental moral intuitions; and that, though these moral intuitions are the results of accumulated experiences of Utility, gradually organized and inherited, they have come to be quite independent of conscious experience. Just in the same way that I believe the intuition of space, possessed by any living individual, to have arisen from organized and consolidated experiences of all antecedent individuals who bequeathed to him their slowly developed nervous organizations — just as I believe that this intuition, requiring only to be made definite and complete by personal experiences, has practically become a form of

Here, it seems to me, we get the compromise between extreme intuitionism and extreme empiricism of which I spoke before. Spencer is perfectly conscious of his relationship to the two schools. "It is possible," he says,[1] "to agree with moralists of the intuitive school respecting the existence of a moral sense, while differing with them respecting its origin. I have contended in the foregoing division of this work, and elsewhere, that though there exist feelings of the kind alleged, they are not of supernatural origin, but of natural origin; that, being generated by the discipline of the social activities, internal and external, they are not alike in all men, but differ more or less everywhere in proportion as the social activities differ; and that, in virtue of their mode of genesis, they have a coördinate authority with the inductions of utility." "But now, while we are shown that the moral-sense doctrine in its original form is not true, we are also shown that it adumbrates a truth, and a much higher truth.

thought, apparently quite independent of experience; so do I believe that the experiences of utility, organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding nervous modifications, which, by continued transmission and accumulation, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition — certain emotions responding to right and wrong conduct, which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility. I also hold that, just as the space-intuition responds to the exact demonstrations of Geometry, and has its rough conclusions interpreted and verified by them; so will moral intuitions respond to the demonstrations of Moral Science, and will have their rough conclusions interpreted and verified by them."

[1] *The Inductions of Ethics*, § 117.

For the facts cited, chapter after chapter, unite in proving that the sentiments and ideas current in each society become adjusted to the kinds of activity predominating in it. A life of constant external enmity generates a code in which aggression, conquest, revenge, are inculcated, while peaceful occupations are reprobated. Conversely, a life of settled internal amity generates a code inculcating the virtues conducing to harmonious coöperation — justice, honesty, veracity, regard for others' claims. And the implication is that if the life of internal amity continues unbroken from generation to generation, there must result not only the appropriate code, but the appropriate emotional nature — a moral sense adapted to moral requirements. Men so conditioned will acquire, to the degree needful for complete guidance, that innate conscience which the intuitive moralists erroneously suppose to be possessed by mankind at large. There needs but a continuance of absolute peace externally, and a rigorous insistence of non-aggression internally to ensure the moulding of men into a form naturally characterized by all the virtues."[1]

(4) With this theory, as worked out by Spencer, the views of M. Guyau,[2] Leslie Stephen,[3] B. Car-

[1] *Inductions*, § 191.

[2] *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction*, 2d ed., 1881; English translation, 1899; *La morale anglaise contemporaine*, 1885, Conclusion, pp. 423 ff.

[3] *The Science of Ethics*, 1882: "Conscience is the utterance of the public spirit of the race, ordering us to obey the primary con-

neri,[1] H. Höffding,[2] G. von Gizycki,[3] R. von Jhering,[4] W. Wundt,[5] F. Paulsen,[6] S. Alexander,[7] Hugo Münsterberg,[8] Paul Rée,[9] Georg Simmel,[10] and A. Sutherland[11] practically agree.[12]

ditions of its welfare, and it acts not the less forcibly though we may not understand the source of its authority or the end at which it is aiming."

[1] *Sittlichkeit und Darwinismus*, 1871.

[2] *Psychology*, VI, C, § 8; *Ethik*, 1888. Conscience, he holds, is an instinct which has developed in the race. It commands categorically, like all instincts.

[3] *Moralphilosophie*, 1889.

[4] *Der Zweck im Recht*, 1877, 3d ed., 1893.

[5] *Ethik*, 1886, 2d ed., 1892, English translation, in 3 vols., by Titchener, Washburn, and Gulliver.

[6] *System der Ethik*, 1889, 5th ed., 1899, edited and translated by Thilly, 1899. According to Paulsen, duty at first consists in acting in accordance with custom. I perform certain customary acts because it is the will of my surroundings. The will of the people speaks to the individual in custom. In my feeling of duty, as it now exists, the will of my parents, teachers, ancestors, and race is expressed. The authority of the gods whom I worship is also manifested in the feeling. At first man obeys the law because of external authority; in time he comes to feel an inner obligation to the law, he acknowledges the right of others over him. See Bk. II, chap. v.

[7] *Moral Order and Progress*, 1889.

[8] *Der Ursprung der Sittlichkeit*, 1889.

[9] *Die Entstehung des Gewissens*, 1885.

[10] *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, 2 vols., 1892, 1893. See Vol. I, chap. i.

[11] *The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct*, 2 vols., 1898.

[12] For evolutional ethics, see Williams, *A Review of Evolutional Ethics.*

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION OF CONSCIENCE[1]

1. *The Psychological Facts.* — Now that we have examined the historical attempts which have been made to account for the moral consciousness, let us try to come to some conclusion ourselves. We cannot, however, it seems to me, accomplish anything without a thorough understanding of what the fact we are considering is. We must first analyze the psychical processes concerned in this discussion, and then seek to interpret them. The false explanations which have been advanced by so many of the writers whom we have passed in review, are, in my opinion, largely due to their neglect of psychology. To assert that we must study our phenomena psychologically, means simply that we must know what we are talking about. If the science of ethics is

[1] See, besides the works mentioned in the course of the last chapter: Spencer, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, Part VIII, chaps. vii f.; Wundt, *Physiological Psychology*, Vol. II, chap. xviii, 3; Höffding, *Psychology*, VI, C, § 8; Baldwin, *Feeling and Will*, pp. 205 ff.; Sully, *The Human Mind*, Vol. II, pp. 155 ff.; Ladd, *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory*, pp. 579 ff.; Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, pp. 715 ff.; Sutherland, *The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct*, especially Vol. II, chaps. xv ff. — Parts of this chapter appeared in the January number of the *Philosophical Review*, 1900.

to achieve any results, it must do what all other sciences are doing: it must analyze the facts which it is desirous of explaining. Metaphysical speculations on ethics will have to follow in the wake of psychology.[1]

As was said before, we pronounce moral judgments upon ourselves as well as upon others; we approve and disapprove of motives and acts, we call them right and wrong. Certain modes of conduct, we say, *ought* to be performed, others *ought* to be avoided. A bankrupt conveys a piece of property to a friend in order to avoid the payment of a just debt, with the understanding that it is to be returned to him later; but when the time comes, the receiver of the property fails to make restitution. I disapprove of the conduct of both parties; I say that they did wrong, that they *ought not* to have acted as they did. Jean Valjean, the released galley-slave in Hugo's *Les Misérables*, finds a refuge in the home of the good *curé* after every one else had refused him shelter, and repays his benefactor by robbing him. The priest forgives him, and even tells a falsehood to save him from punishment. We say the convict did wrong, the priest did right. Jean Valjean, overcome by the sweet charity of the good old man, leads a useful and honorable life from that time on. But one day he hears of the apprehension of a supposed Jean Valjean. Now what shall he do? One

[1] See Simmel, *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, Vol. I, Preface.

voice within him tells him to let things take their natural course, and not to forsake the position achieved after so much suffering and transgression. The happiness of thousands depends upon his remaining where he is. But another voice, which we call his conscience, blames him for these thoughts, and urges him authoritatively to do what is right and give himself up. After terrible inner struggles, the conscience finally triumphs, and Jean Valjean goes back to the galleys. The conflict is at an end, the moral craving is satisfied, and peace reigns in his heart. Had he allowed the supposed Jean Valjean to be punished in his stead, he would have suffered remorse, stings or pangs of conscience, as we say. He would have looked back upon his conduct and still have recognized the authority of the right over the wrong. We contemplate the misfortune of the real Jean Valjean with the deepest pity, but with all our sorrowing we cannot wish that he had acted differently. Our moral approval rises to moral enthusiasm, in which our respect and love for the moral law reach their height; we bow down humbly before the rule of right as before a higher power, and say, Thy will, not mine, be done.

2. *Analysis of Conscience.* — We have here examples of the phenomenon which we desire to investigate. The idea of a motive or an act arises in my consciousness. At once or after some reflection, peculiar feelings and impulses group themselves around this idea: feelings of approval which are pleasura-

ble, or (as the case may be), feelings of disapproval, which are painful; feelings urging me toward the performance of the act, commanding me, forcing me, as it were, to keep it before my mind and to recognize its authority over me, crying out, yes, yes, you must: or feelings deterring me from the act; a kind of shame takes possession of me, I feel ill at ease, in spite of the fact that the forbidden thing may have a certain charm about it. Or, I may have the ideas of several acts or springs of conduct before me, one surrounded by feelings of approval and obligation, the other by feelings of disapproval and deterrence, the one carrying with it a sense of authority over the other. These ideas may rise and fall in consciousness, and with them their concomitant feelings. I may flit from one set to the other, until at last one may persist and lead to an act of volition, and drive out the other. These inner processes express themselves in judgments: This act is right or good; This act is wrong or bad; I *ought* to do this act; I *ought not* to do that. In popular language we say, My conscience approves of this, condemns that, commands this, prohibits that; my conscience warns me against or urges me toward a certain line of action; I must obey the voice of my conscience. In case the right act is willed and done, or even willed without being done, I feel satisfied for having willed it, and perhaps a certain sorrow for the vanquished possibility with which I was in love. Indeed, my moral satisfaction and

self-approval may become so strong as to fill me with Pharisaic vanity, and I may gloat over my moral triumph. If the wrong act wins the victory, and the thought of the right one lingers on in consciousness, I feel sad, troubled, ashamed, contemptible. I look upon the conquered past and read a silent sorrow in its face, which goes to my heart and causes my soul to resound with self-reproaches.[1] I sit in judgment upon myself and pronounce myself guilty. These painful feelings we call feelings of remorse, repentance, pangs of conscience. They may become so intense as to throw the sufferer into the depths of despair, and make him willing and even anxious to undergo the severest punishments.

We see, then, that conscience functions both before and after the performance of the act. When the act perceived or thought of is not my own, but another's, or only an imagined one, the process which takes place is much the same. The feelings and impulses of approval or disapproval, already mentioned, spring up in me even more readily than before; I judge that the act is right or wrong, and ought or ought not to be done.

Certain feelings and impulses, then, surround the idea of a deed and lead us to make a judgment. The act arouses certain feelings and impulses in us,

[1] See Euripides's *Orestes*, Æschylus's *Agamemnon*. See also the *Gospel of St. Matthew:* "And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him: Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly."

and we express this effect in a judgment of value. When we characterize an act as right or wrong in this way, we are really characterizing ourselves. We *evaluate* the act because it makes a certain impression upon us, just as we call an object beautiful because it arouses certain feelings in us. If these feelings were absent, if acts did not, for some reason or other, arouse in us feelings of approval, disapproval, and obligation, we should not judge as we do, or make moral evaluations.

All the processes which we have just mentioned we may gather together and embrace under one general term, *conscience*. We must emphasize the fact that conscience is a mere general name used to designate a series of complex phenomena, and not a separate special faculty. Hence to say, as common sense does, that we make moral judgments because we have a *faculty* for making them,[1] does not help us. It is not an explanation of the fact that we remember, to refer to a faculty or power of memory. To say that we remember because we have the power of memory, is like saying that we remember because we remember.[2]

3. *The Feeling of Obligation.* — We find in conscience a complexus of psychical elements. Let us consider some of the more characteristic ones a

[1] Cf. chap. ii, § 3.

[2] All these explanations remind us of Molière's physician, who, when asked why opium made one sleep, sagely replied: "Because there is in it a dormitive power."

little more in detail. We have a mixture of feeling and impulse which we may call the feeling of *obligation*, or *oughtness*.[1] This feeling, which Butler emphasized so strongly,[2] is, however, not merely a feeling of "impulsion toward" a line of conduct, not the same as any other impulse, as Guyau asserts.[3] To say that a "pointer *ought* to point," is not, as Darwin seems to think,[4] the same as to say that a man *ought* to be honest. Nor, again, is this feeling of obligation identical with the feeling of logical necessity, as Clarke would appear to hold.[5] Moral obligation is a peculiar kind of obligation, a unique mental process. We cannot describe it, we must experience it in order to understand it. In this regard, however, it is like all other psychical states. It is as impossible to describe obligation to a being that does not feel it, as it is to talk to a blind man of colors.

It is this feeling of obligation which inspires men with awe, and makes them believe that conscience is a voice from another world. Instead of explaining the phenomenon they personify it, looking upon it as something outside of themselves, as a direct messenger from heaven. Even philosophers find it difficult to account for the authoritativeness of con-

[1] The state of consciousness which we call the feeling of obligation contains an active or *impulsive* element.

[2] See chap. ii, § 5 (1).

[3] *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction.*

[4] *The Descent of Man*, Part I, chap. iv, p. 116.

[5] See chap. ii, § 3 (3).

science without having recourse to the supernatural or suprasensible. "The faculty," says Martineau, "is the communion of God's life and guiding love entering and abiding with an apprehensive capacity in myself. We encounter an objective authority without quitting our own centre of conscience."[1] "The authority which reveals itself within us, reports itself not only as underived from our will, but as independent of our idiosyncrasies altogether."[2] Kant likewise discovers in himself this feeling or impulse of obligation or authority accompanying certain ideas, and finds that it is expressed in language by the imperative mood: Thou shalt, Thou shalt not. He abstracts from the content of these promptings of conscience that which seems to be common to all of them, their authoritative character, the feeling of obligation, and makes an entity of this abstraction. It is a *form of the mind* like space, time, and causality. But since this form or category of obligation is concerned with action or practice, Kant calls it a category of the *practical* reason, or the will.[3]

[1] *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II, chap. iv, p. 104.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 102.

[3] See Simmel, *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, Vol. I, chap. i. Kant, of course, does not regard obligation as a feeling, but as a deliverance of the practical reason, or will, thereby evidently emphasizing the *impulsive* nature of the feeling of obligation. He afterward tries to give this abstract form of oughtness a content. He searches for a principle common to acts which are accompanied in consciousness by obligation, and finds as the gen-

In answer to Kant we may say that the feeling or impulse of obligation is no more a category or form of the mind than any other feeling. Nor is it something outside of my empirical consciousness, as I experience it. To say that a feeling of authority or obligation is present in consciousness, means that *I* feel bound or constrained or obliged to perform certain acts. Obligation is not a special category or faculty or form of the reason; it is a psychical fact which is never found in consciousness apart from other mental states. To say that this feeling or impulse is an innate form, does not help us any more than to say that the feeling of hope is such a form. Of course, hope and fear and love are all "innate forms," if we mean by this that human beings experience them in connection with certain concrete ideas. What we wish to know is what modes of conduct are felt to be obligatory, and, if possible, why they are felt to be so.

4. *The Feelings of Approval and Disapproval.* — Some thinkers emphasize this feeling of obligation, and regard it as constituting the very essence of the moral consciousness, or conscience. But, as we noticed before, the idea of an act is, or at least may be, suffused with feelings of approbation and reprobation.[1] The contemplation of a deed arouses feelings

eral characteristic of all obligatory acts their fitness to become universal law. See chap. ii, § 7, (1); also chap. vii, § 15.

[1] These feelings, too, like the feeling of obligation, contain active or *impulsive* elements, which express themselves in bodily movements.

of condemnation, contempt, disgust, abhorrence, indignation, etc., or feelings of approval, admiration, respect, reverence, enthusiasm, etc. Some philosophers have laid stress on such feelings, and have identified them with conscience. The moral-sense philosophers[1] belong to this class, which is very apt to overlook the authoritative element in morality. *Æsthetic* feelings may also arise in connection with those we have mentioned. I may feel æsthetic pleasure in the contemplation of a deed.[2] This fact has led some authors to identify the moral sentiments with the æsthetic feelings, and to look upon ethics as a branch of æsthetics.[3] We must insist, however, that conscience is a complexus of psychical states, and that the characteristic emotional elements peculiar to it are the feelings of approval (or disapproval) and the feeling of obligation or authority.

5. *Conscience as Judgment.* — But conscience also *judges*, and in so far is *cognitive*, or intellectual in character. Let us see how we come to make moral judgments. The perception or thought of an act arouses feelings of obligation and feelings of approval. We express these feelings in language by saying, This act is right and ought to be done. We make a moral judgment. The judgment here is based on feeling. When I declare an act to be right or wrong, I am expressing my feelings with

[1] See chap. ii, § 4. [2] See Sully, *Human Mind*, Vol. II, p. 167.
[3] See Herbart and Volkmann.

reference to it. When I say an object is beautiful, I am really saying that it arouses certain feelings (here called æsthetic) in me. When I assert that spitting is indecent, I am giving expression to the feelings of disgust aroused in me by a certain act. If the so-called moral act and beautiful object and indecent behavior did not provoke in me these peculiar emotional reactions, I should not judge them as I do.

Some philosophers have emphasized the cognitive element in conscience, and have, therefore, called it the faculty of moral judgment. For them it is not an emotional faculty, but a cognitive faculty, a faculty that discovers truth. It is the special faculty by which we discern moral truth. We may say, however, first, that this is not its only function, that we must not overlook the characteristic emotional and impulsive elements contained in conscience, and secondly, that there is no difference between the faculty which makes *moral* judgments (as such) and the faculty which makes other judgments. The difference lies in the subject-matter judged and the mental background (feelings and impulses) which gives rise to the judgment. Judgment is judgment, whether it be applied in morals, æsthetics, or etiquette. Judgment is a fundamental activity of mind involving analysis and synthesis. When I say, This house is red, I am analyzing one of my presentations, picking out of it a particular quality, and predicating this of the original concrete whole

which I have just broken up. When I say, This act is wrong, I am really analyzing out of the act the feelings which it arouses in me, I am stating what impression it makes upon my consciousness.

6. *Criticism of Intuitionism.*—Some moralists have recognized the fact that conscience functions as a judging power, and, therefore, speak of it in the manner of Calderwood, who says: "Conscience is that power of mind by which moral law is discovered to each individual for the guidance of his conduct. It is the *reason*, as that discovers to us absolute moral truth."[1] Cudworth and Clarke looked upon such judgments as, Stealing is wrong, Murder is wrong, etc., as self-evident and necessary, and consequently proclaimed them as eternal truths, truths of the kind discovered in mathematics. Such propositions, they declared, are recognized immediately and intuitively; it is neither necessary nor possible to prove them. They are inherent in the mind, original possessions of reason, *a priori*, innate. Other writers believe that we immediately *perceive* the rightness and wrongness of acts, that as soon as an act is presented to consciousness, we *perceive* its moral worth. To this school belong Martineau and Lecky. The rationalistic intuitionists, therefore, hold either that certain moral propositions are engraven on the mind, or that we have a rational faculty which is bound by its very nature to

[1] *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, Part I, chap. iv, p. 77, 12th edition.

formulate them, while the perceptional intuitionists maintain that we have no such universal propositions stamped upon the mind or turned out by reason, but that we perceive the rightness and wrongness of acts and motives immediately upon their presentation to consciousness.

In answer to these schools we may say, among other things: (1) Although there is present in the moral consciousness an intellectual or cognitive element (call it perception or reason or what you will), this is not all there is in it. We must not ignore the important emotional and impulsive constituents mentioned before.

(2) We have no such innate knowledge or perception of moral distinctions as is claimed by extreme intuitionists. If we did, then all men would have to agree in their judgments, which is not the case. It will not do to say that the moral law has been obscured and eliminated in savage tribes.[1] We cannot corrupt or eliminate the perception of space and time in whole groups of men; how then should it be possible to wipe out the *a priori* moral forms? Kant seems to think that men who are apparently without conscience are not actually without it, but merely disregard its dictates.[2] This is undoubtedly true of some men; but we surely cannot claim that whole ages and peoples have known

[1] See Leibniz, *New Essays*, Bk. I, chap. ii, § 12.

[2] See Abbott's translation, pp. 192, 311, 321, 343; also *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, pp. 235, 285.

the laws of morality as we know them now, and have deliberately refused to obey them. But, it may be said, though men may differ as to details, they surely accept certain fundamental moral principles as self-evident and obligatory. Thus cruelty is universally condemned and benevolence approved. "It is a psychological fact," says Lecky,[1] "that we are intuitively conscious that our benevolent affections are superior to our malevolent ones."[2] Anthropologists and historians, however, have adduced many facts which seem to contradict these statements, or, at least, to render them doubtful.[3] "Conscience," says Burton, "does not exist in Eastern Africa, and repentance expresses regret for missed opportunities of mortal crime. Robbery constitutes an honorable man; murder — the more atrocious the midnight crime the better — makes the hero."[4] "The Arabian robber," says Burckhardt, "regards his occupation as an honorable one, and the term *haramy* (robber) is one of the most flattering titles which one can give a young hero."[5] Mr. Galbraith, an Indian agent, describes the Sioux as "bigoted, barbarous, and exceedingly superstitious. They

[1] *History of European Morals*, Vol. I, pp. 99 f.

[2] P. Rée gives a long list of writers who agree with this idea in his *Entstehung des Gewissens*, pp. 9, 10, 25–27.

[3] A good résumé of such facts is given by Williams, *A Review of Evolutional Ethics*, pp. 466 ff.; Rée, pp. 13 ff.; Spencer, *Inductions*, pp. 325 ff. See also in this connection Locke's *Essay*, Bk. I, chap. ii.

[4] *First Footsteps in Eastern Africa*, p. 176.

[5] *Wahali*, p. 121.

regard most of the vices as virtues. Theft, arson, rape, and murder are among them regarded as the means of distinction; and the young Indian from childhood is taught to regard killing as the highest of virtues."[1] "In Tahiti, the missionaries considered that no less than two-thirds of the children were murdered by their parents."[2] "Indeed, I do not remember a single instance in which a savage is recorded as having shown any symptoms of remorse; and almost the only case I can recall to mind, in which a man belonging to one of the lower races has accounted for an act by saying explicitly that it was right, was when Mr. Hunt asked a young Fijian why he had killed his mother."[3] Darwin does not believe that the primitive conscience would reproach a man for injuring his enemy. "Rather it would reproach him, if he had not revenged himself. To do good in return for evil, to love your enemy, is a height of morality to which it may be doubted whether the social instincts would, by themselves, have ever led us. It is necessary that these instincts, together with sympathy, should have been highly cultivated and extended by the aid of reason, instruction, and the love or fear of God, before any such golden rule would be thought of and obeyed."[4]

(3) We cannot, therefore, prove the innateness of conscience by referring to principles that are uni-

[1] Lubbock, *Origin of Civilization*, pp. 397, 398.
[2] *Ib.* [3] *Ib.*, p. 405.
[4] *The Descent of Man*, p. 113 note.

versally recognized as right. Some moralists grant the truth of this statement, but still maintain that conscience is innate. It is true, they declare, that the moral judgments of mankind diverge, that one age or tribe may approve of what another condemns. But all times and peoples agree that some form of conduct is better, higher, nobler than another, that right is better than wrong, that we bow down before authority. This is practically the theory advocated by the Schoolmen,[1] who held that we have an innate faculty, the synderesis, which tells us that the right ought to be done and the wrong avoided.

There is, however, no such faculty as the one spoken of here. The proposition, The right ought to be done and the wrong avoided, is, like all general statements of the kind, the result of abstraction. We find by experience that many particular acts are accompanied in consciousness by feelings of obligation and approval, and that others are associated with feelings of disapproval and deterrence. We bring these acts under general heads, and call the former right, the latter wrong. To say that right acts ought to be performed and wrong ones avoided, simply means that certain forms of conduct arouse feelings of obligation and approval, and others the reverse. The proposition, therefore, that we ought to do the right and refrain from the wrong, is a general expression of the fact that we feel obliged to perform certain actions and to refrain from

[1] See chap. ii, § 3 (1).

others; it is a universal proposition, an inference drawn from the facts of experience, not an *a priori* judgment of the reason.

(4) Even if it were true that certain moral judgments were universally accepted, this would not necessarily prove them to be innate. They might be the products of universally prevalent conditions.

(5) Nor can we prove the innateness of conscience from "the self-evidence and necessity" of some of its deliverances. It is true that such propositions as: Stealing is wrong, Murder is wrong, Honesty is right, etc., seem necessary and self-evident to us children of the nineteenth century. But they may be satisfactorily explained without our having recourse to the doctrine of nativism, which is, after all, merely a confession of ignorance. As we saw before, the ideas of certain acts, say of murder and self-sacrifice, are accompanied in consciousness by peculiar feelings called moral feelings, feelings which are lacking when we think of other acts or things. I have no such sentiments when I perceive or think of a tree or a mountain. Whenever these feelings surround an idea, we call that for which it stands right or wrong. To say that stealing, or any particular deed, is wrong, means that the idea of that act is associated in my mind with feelings of disapproval, etc. Hence the judgment, Stealing is wrong, is equivalent to the proposition that an act which is condemned and prohibited is condemned and prohibited. The words, *stealing*, *adultery*, *robbery*, *murder*, etc.,

contain everything that is expressed in the predicate, *wrong* or *bad;* they express not only ideas of acts, but our attitude toward these acts. The judgment in question is what Kant would call an analytical judgment, *i.e.*, one in which the predicate is but a repetition of the subject. Such judgments are always necessary and self-evident; the predicate is identical with, or only another way of writing, the subject. And when I *perceive* an act to be right or wrong, it is because that act arouses feelings in me in consequence of which I approve or disapprove of it.[1]

7. *Criticism of Emotional Intuitionism.* — If all this is so, the question concerning the innateness of conscience or moral judgment must be formulated in a slightly different manner. Are the moral feelings, we now ask, which accompany certain ideas, the original associates of those ideas? That is, do the deeds which we *now* designate as right and wrong always arouse, and have they always aroused, in the consciousness, the feelings mentioned before?

We can hardly assert it. One age, or race, or nation, or class, or sect, or even individual, may regard an act as right which another views with indifference or abhorrence. We cannot read without a thrill of pain and horror the accounts of gladiatorial contests which the purest Roman virgin witnessed without the slightest moral compunction.

[1] See Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap v, § 4; Rée, *Die Entstehung des Gewissens.*

The orthodox Jew is conscience-stricken for having lighted a fire in his house on the Sabbath, the Hindoo for having occasioned the death of a cow, the Turkish woman for exposing her face. The ancient Icelander regarded revenge not merely as sweet, but as praiseworthy and honorable, and "it most likely had never entered the mind of the Celtic chief that robbery merely as robbery was a wicked and disgraceful act."[1]

If these feelings of obligation, etc., were the original and inseparable associates of certain modes of conduct, we should expect every age and race to pronounce the same judgments. It would not be possible either to add these feelings to certain ideas or to subtract them from them. We should not be able to educate them away, so to speak. The truth is, our parents and teachers not only arouse ideas in our minds, but also surround these ideas with a moral fringe. The words of the language which they teach us to understand and to speak, express not only thoughts, but *values*. The terms, *murder*, *robbery*, *theft*, *benevolence*, *veracity*, *sacrifice*, stand not merely for acts and modes of conduct and dispositions of the will, but for our feelings and impulses in reference to them. The past transmits to the present its ideas with the moral halos encircling them. The present frequently changes its values, and so it happens that acts which were once associated in consciousness with the moral sentiments lose the fringe which once

[1] Macaulay. Quoted by Bain, *Emotions and Will*, p. 280.

surrounded them, or arouse new associations. The sinner of yesterday becomes the saint of to-morrow.

8. *Genesis of Conscience.* — Let us now see how the process of moralization goes on. The connection between the moral feelings and the ideas of certain acts is largely brought about by education. Children are made to observe that certain acts do not meet with the approval of their surroundings. Frowns, austere looks, shakes of the head, stern words, and other signs of displeasure precede and follow certain modes of conduct. The child impulsively imitates these outward manifestations of disapproval at an early age, and so begins to feel a certain kind of uneasiness in connection with certain acts himself. He also feels pain and anger when certain acts are directed against himself, and instinctively resents them, or frowns them down. Words spoken to him in an authoritative manner by a parent or any other superior arouse in his consciousness feelings of coercion and restraint; he feels instinctively that he *must* do a certain act or leave it undone.[1]

[1] See Sully, *The Human Mind*, Vol. II, pp. 164 f.: "The force of a command on a child cannot be wholly attributed to experience and prevision of consequences. It shows itself too early, and is out of proportion to the range and intensity of the experiences of punishment. Here then we have, as it seems, to do with a 'residual phenomenon,' which we must regard as instinctive. This instinctive deference to an uttered command is in part referrible to the superior power of external stimuli, or sense-presentations generally in our mental life. A command given with emphasis (special loudness and distinctness of tone, accompanied by intent

The performance of acts which are frowned down and prohibited by direct command is frequently followed by consequences of a disagreeable kind, natural as well as artificial, and the vague remembrance of these arouses fear and aversion. The child also often hears that there are other, mysterious beings who will punish him for disobedience, and the fear produced by the prospect is all the more intense because of the uncertainty and mystery of the imagined evil.[1] In the course of time he is told that there is a God, and that this God disapproves of and punishes offences. And then the instinctive craving for recognition, the desire to be well thought of, which may become more and more intensified, assists in turning the individual from certain kinds of behavior, and attracts him to others.

look) is the most powerful way of initiating or bringing on the corresponding movement (or inhibition of movement). In this respect it stands on a level with the actual presentation of an action by another, which, as we shall see, has a powerful tendency to call forth an imitative response. This force of external verbal suggestion, the effect of which we have already seen in the domain of normal belief, is illustrated further in the phenomena of hypnotic suggestion, which Guyau has recently brought into an instructive analogy with the moral influence of education. (Guyau considers that suggestion sets up in the hypnotized subject a sense of 'must,' or of obligation closely analogous to a moral feeling. See his volume, *Education and Heredity*, English translation, chap. i.) The natural impulse to comply with commands is, however, more than this, and involves a rudiment of regard of what others think and say of us as intrinsically valuable, — that is to say, what we have dealt with under the head, love of approbation."

[1] The small boy's vague conception of the goblins makes the threat that the goblins will get him all the more alarming.

Afterward, when sympathy develops, love begins to play an important part as a motive to action. The child's affection for persons around him and the God above him makes him anxious to avoid causing displeasure. He suffers with others, the thought of hurting them hurts him, and deters him from certain acts. With the growth of intelligence the agent learns to understand the *rationale* of certain prohibitions, and is deterred from breaking the law. The training begun in the family is continued by the school and the world at large. On every hand he meets with signs of disapproval and pain, and hears the command, Thou shalt not. In this way he learns to fear and acknowledge the law.

The feelings aroused by the disapproval and authoritative tones of others, the feeling of pain, the fear of punishment, human and divine, the fear of losing the good opinion of others, the fear of causing injury, directly or indirectly, to himself and the beings he loves, form the beginning, in the child's consciousness, of that peculiar complexus of sentiments which we call moral. In all these feelings there is an element of opposition to the acts with which they are associated, a kind of aversion, a feeling of negation and deterrence, of *must not* or *shall not*, a feeling which is strongly intensified by the combination of the factors we have mentioned. In the course of time many of these factors drop out of consciousness, and the feeling of opposition and deterrence comes to be directly associated with the

ideas of acts. The agent feels a check in the presence of certain acts without picturing to himself the causes which originally produced that feeling. He feels a restraint or compulsion which seems to be within him, and yet to come from without; its mysteriousness fills him with awe. When this sentiment surrounds the idea of a deed, he cannot help recognizing its binding force over him. All the other elements seem to fade out of consciousness, leaving behind a kind of abstract obligation and disapproval, a feeling of antagonism to the thing with whose idea it is connected.

A similar process takes place with acts that meet with approval, and we need not follow it out here. These feelings of approval may be intensified into feelings of respect, admiration, love, and, where the element of mystery enters in, reverence. We admire and love good deeds with the same fervor with which we love and admire persons; we reverence them as we reverence the gods. We feel constrained or obliged to perform acts to which our consciousness gives a moral value, we recognize their binding force.

In other words, the feelings of resentment, fear, etc., which we find connecting themselves with the ideas of certain acts in the consciousness of the child, gradually develop into the feelings of moral disapproval, deterrence, and their opposites, which we discover in the adult. It must not be imagined, however, that these feelings are developed in the

same degree in all persons. In some the ideas of certain acts merely arouse feelings of fear. Many persons, I am convinced, feel that they must not do certain things on account of the fear of discovery and the consequent punishments.[1] Others are afraid of the wrath of God or other supernatural powers, here and hereafter. Still others are afraid without knowing exactly what they are afraid of; the thought of certain modes of conduct immediately calls up a vague fear, of what they know not.[2] On the other hand, there are persons who respect and reverence the law, who love duty for duty's sake. They feel themselves bound to obey the law, without feeling bound to any person or institution; they feel a blind pressure toward the right, without being urged by fear to do it. Such characters are not, in my opinion, as common as is often believed. They are the rigorous moralists, the moral enthusiasts. They feel as Kant felt when he said: "Two things fill the mind with new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: *the starry heavens above and the moral law within;*"[3] and when he wrote his celebrated apos-

[1] "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

[2] Schopenhauer finds in conscience the following ingredients: $\frac{1}{5}$ fear of man, $\frac{1}{5}$ superstition, $\frac{1}{5}$ prejudice, $\frac{1}{5}$ vanity, $\frac{1}{5}$ custom.

[3] *Kritik of Practical Reason*, Part II, Abbott's translation, p. 260. Lord Houghton translates these lines as follows: —

"Two things I contemplate with ceaseless awe:
The stars of heaven and man's sense of Law."

trophe to Duty: "Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name that dost embrace nothing charming or insinuating, but requirest submission, and yet seekest not to move the will by aught that would arouse natural aversion or terror, but merely holdest forth a law which of itself finds entrance into the mind, and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience), a law before which all inclinations are dumb, even though they secretly counterwork; what origin is worthy of thee, and where is to be found the root of thy noble descent?"[1] They feel as Wordsworth felt when he composed his *Ode to Duty*: —

> "Stern daughter of the voice of God!
> O Duty! if that name thou love
> Who art a light to guide, a rod
> To check the erring, and reprove;
> Thou, who art victory and law
> When empty terrors overawe;
> From vain temptation dost set free;
> And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity."

We have seen how the moral sentiments, the feelings of approval and disapproval, and the ought-feeling, come to be connected with certain forms of conduct in the mind of the individual.[2] We may assume

[1] *Kritik of Practical Reason*, Part I, chap. iii, Abbott's translation, p. 180.

[2] I quote from Ladd's *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory*, p. 582: "The parent, or the nurse, or the teacher, deliberately and habitually connects with certain 'doings' the arousement of the ought-feeling and the feeling of approbation; with certain other forms of conduct, in the same way, are connected the opposite forms of these ethical sentiments. With all persons, including

that they originated somewhat similarly in the race. The primitive man, let us say, instinctively resented attacks upon himself, and those near to him, and feared the painful consequences which injury done to others was bound to bring upon him and those for whom he cared. In the course of time, with the development of society, the fear of personal revenge gave way to the fear of the ruler and the State, the fear of the wrath of invisible powers, the fear of losing social recognition, the fear of causing ideal pain to others. Then, perhaps, the feeling of sympathy, which at first included only a few in its scope, was extended, taking in larger numbers, and became a motive. Finally, feelings of respect and reverence for the law as law, the feeling of obligation, arose as in the case of the individual. If it is true that the development of the individual, or *ontogenesis*, is a repetition

those not thus well bred, the social and even the physical environment tends to establish a similar connection. But this connection implies, in its very possibility, the beginning of a so-called 'moral nature' for the child. All its pleasure-pains may thus come to have for it a quasi-moral import. On the basis of this experience with its own states of affective consciousness, considered as connected with deeds of its own will and voluntary courses of conduct, the intellect of the child generalizes. Here, however, the greater part of the conclusions — such as this is right and that is wrong — are accepted as already formed from those older than itself. The 'freeing' of the idea of the right from its concrete and sensuous clothing, as it were, results in a formation of a more and more abstract system of moral principles. Such are statements like the following: Truth-telling is right, and lying is wrong; honesty is right, and stealing is wrong; kindness is right, and cruelty is wrong, etc."

of the development of the race, or *phylogenesis*, then we must imagine that this feeling of obligation is a late arrival in the race-consciousness, and not an original possession in the sense that it existed in the primitive soul.

9. *In what Sense Conscience is Innate.* — The individual, then, does not know or feel at birth what is right and what is wrong; nor is the feeling of obligation immediately aroused in him. He possesses, however, many instincts out of which the moral sentiments may be said to evolve. Among these instincts, which must be regarded as innate, may be mentioned: the feeling of resentment, the fear of others' resentment, the regard for others' opinions, the impulse of imitation, the sympathetic regard for others' welfare, the tendency to submit to superior powers, or to obey commands. These instinctive factors of consciousness form the basis of the higher moral feelings; out of them the latter will grow under the proper conditions. If the fact that the higher moral feelings are bound to be developed in consciousness under suitable conditions means that they are innate, then we must subscribe to the doctrines of intuitionism. In this sense, however, all our feelings, hope, fear, anger, etc., — indeed, everything in consciousness, our capacity for language, our capacity for hearing and seeing, — are original or innate. But this does not yet prove that the moral sentiments are originally connected with the ideas of certain forms of conduct. All that we

can assert so far is that such feelings may be aroused in consciousness, and may be attached to the ideas of certain acts.

Moreover, if the evolutionistic theory is correct in its doctrine of inheritance, we may suppose that the capacity for feeling approval and obligation is transmitted by its possessors to succeeding generations. Some men seem to be more timid, or cowardly, or cruel, or sympathetic by nature than others, which means that these impulses are more readily produced in them than in others. To say, then, that a man has inherited a great respect or reverence for the law, would signify that, if he were properly trained, he would develop these feelings. In this sense we may speak of conscience as an instinct, as some writers do. And, furthermore, if it is possible for us to inherit a tendency to feel and to think and to act in a certain way, why should it not be possible for us to feel obligation and approval in connection with certain ideas? We inherit not only fear in the abstract, or the capacity for fear, but the fear of particular things, say of dark places, vermin, etc.[1] If certain fixed neural relations are formed between the brain processes which stand for particular percepts, and those which stand for particular feelings (of fear, etc.), and are transmitted from generation to gen-

[1] See James, *Psychology*, chapter on "Instinct"; Sully, *The Human Mind*, Vol. II, p. 71; Ziehen, *Introduction to Physiological Psychology*, pp. 244 ff.; Schneider, *Der menschliche Wille*, p. 224.

eration, there is no great reason why such connections should not be formed between the paths which represent certain acts, like murder, for example, and those which are the physiological counterparts of the ought-feelings, whatever they may be, and be handed down to offspring. This would not mean that the child is born with these two psychical states together, but it would mean that, under the proper conditions and at the proper time, the connection would be formed more easily than if it had not already existed in a long line of ancestors.[1]

[1] See Darwin, *Descent of Man*, pp. 123 f. After quoting that part of Spencer's letter to Mill in which Spencer expresses his belief in the transmission of moral intuitions, Darwin says: "There is not the least inherent improbability, as it seems to me, in virtuous tendencies being more or less strongly inherited; for, not to mention the various dispositions and habits transmitted by many of our domestic animals to their offspring, I have heard of authentic cases in which a desire to steal and a tendency to lie appeared to run in families of the upper ranks; and as stealing is a rare crime in the wealthy classes, we can hardly account by accidental coincidence for the tendency occurring in two or three members of the same family. If bad tendencies are transmitted, it is probable that good ones are likewise transmitted. That the state of the body, by affecting the brain, has great influence on the moral tendencies is known to most of those who have suffered from chronic derangements of the digestion or liver. The same fact is likewise shown by the 'perversion or destruction of the moral sense being often one of the earliest symptoms of mental derangement' (Maudsley, *Body and Mind*, 1870, p. 60), and insanity is notoriously often inherited. Except through the principle of the transmission of moral tendencies, we cannot understand the differences believed to exist in this respect between the various races of mankind. Even the partial transmission of virtuous tendencies would be an immense assistance to the primary impulse derived directly and indirectly from the social instincts.

Nor would this mean that the connection has existed forever and will continue to exist forever, that it is inseparable and eternal, or that the same combinations exist in all human beings.

Whether such tendencies *to feel bound* in the presence of certain acts are really inherited, we cannot tell positively, but there is nothing improbable in the thought. The fact that time and training are required to bring out the moral feelings would be no argument against the belief. There are many instincts in man which do not ripen at once and without the proper excitants, and yet we do not deny to them their instinctive and innate character.

Let us sum up: The moral feelings, as we find them now, are comparatively late arrivals in the history of the individual and the race. They are not the original and inseparable companions of any particular acts, but may become attached to all forms of conduct under suitable conditions. There is nothing impossible in the notion that the tendency to feel them in connection with certain acts may

Admitting for a moment that virtuous tendencies are inherited, it appears probable, at least in such cases as chastity, temperance, humanity to animals, etc., that they become first impressed on the mental organization through habit, instruction, and example, continued during several generations in the same family, and in a quite subordinate degree, or not at all, by the individuals possessing such virtues having succeeded best in the struggle for life." See also Darwin and Spencer in the passages quoted in chap. ii, § 7 (2) and (3); Carneri, *Grundzüge der Ethik*, pp. 348 f.; *Entwickelung und Darwinismus*, p. 212; Williams, *Ethics*, pp. 402 ff., 435 ff., 449 ff.; Sutherland, *Moral Instinct*, Vol. II, pp. 60 ff.

become fixed and habitual, and be transmitted to offspring.

But, the question may be asked, how did the first man who ever felt obligation, etc., come to feel that way? What is the first origin of the feeling? Even if we should maintain that it is a form of vague fear, we should still have to inquire, Whence did it spring? It is as hard to solve this problem as it is to solve the problem of first beginnings in general. How did any feeling, or in fact anything, originally arise? We do not know. We do not know how consciousness arose, or, indeed, how it arises every day in new human beings, or how one thought springs from the other. We think and feel and will, and think and feel and will about our own thinking, feeling, and willing; but how all that is possible we are utterly at a loss to understand. I can explain to you the antecedent and concomitant processes, both physical and mental, which go with certain ideas and feelings and volitions, but if you ask me how such a state as a conscious process is possible at all, I must remain silent. I know *that* consciousness is; *what* it is in the last analysis, and how it came to be, I cannot tell. We have reached the confines of our science at this point. Here the moralist must take leave of you, and hand you over to the tender mercies of the theologian or metaphysician. Did God create the feeling of obligation? Well, if He created you, He created all of you, and there is no need of singling out one particular feel-

ing. Is the feeling of obligation the self-imposed law of your own personality? Yes, in the sense that *you* are your feeling of obligation, that the feeling is not outside of you, something standing over and against you, but *in* you and *of* you.

10. *The Infallibility and Immediacy of Conscience.* — After the foregoing, it will not be difficult to discover our attitude toward several questions which are frequently asked with respect to the conscience. Is conscience infallible? Kant calls an erring conscience "a chimera."[1] Before we can answer this question we must understand its meaning. If all such acts are right as are preceded by the feeling of obligation, *i.e.*, if the criterion of their goodness is the fact that they are dictated by conscience, then, of course, whatever conscience tells me is right, is right, and to say that conscience errs, is to contradict oneself. "An erring conscience" is, indeed, "a chimera," if conscience is the sole criterion of the rightness and wrongness of acts.

But we notice that the popular consciousness often condemns acts which have the approval of an individual conscience, and that history frequently reverses its judgments. It would appear from this that a mistake has been made somewhere, and that there is perhaps a principle by which we judge even the dictates of an individual conscience. If it is true, as some hold, that the goodness of acts ultimately depends upon the effects which they tend to

[1] Abbott's translation, p. 311.

produce, and if it is true that the feeling of obligation may be connected with the ideas of acts which do not produce such effects, then an erring conscience is not a chimera. Ignorance, inexperience, and superstition may cause acts to be clothed with the authority of the law which succeeding generations may stamp with their disapproval. Then again, conditions may change and make new evaluations necessary. The conscience of the race represents the experience of the race, and grows as the latter grows. But the race conscience develops slowly, and may be outstripped by the individual conscience. An individual conscience may be in advance of its age; it may feel bound to forms of conduct which the future will adopt. Every great moral reformer who has been persecuted for conscience' sake was in advance of his times.[1]

Can conscience be educated? If our standpoint is correct, it can. Indeed, a man's conscience is largely the product of education, as we noticed before. Our teachers, past and present, surround the ideas of certain acts with moral feelings, and so educate us into morality. Even if we regard conscience as a *form* of obligation without regard to content, we must hold that its existence depends on training. The feeling of obligation will not appear unless consciousness as a whole is developed.

Does conscience *immediately* tell us what is right and wrong? Not in every instance. A member of

[1] See Paulsen, *Ethics*, pp. 357 ff.

our civilization cannot help disapproving of certain acts immediately, the wrongfulness of which has been impressed upon him from childhood. But there are many courses of conduct which baffle many consciences. We are sometimes in doubt as to what would really be the dutiful course to pursue, until we can bring the case under a general formula. The success with which a person judges the moral worth of an act will often depend upon his ability to refer it to a class concerning which there is no doubt.

11. *Conscience and Inclination.* — Another point deserves to be considered. Kant teaches that such acts are moral as are done from a sense of duty, from a respect for the moral law. Acts which are done from inclination have no moral worth. If you do good from a love of it, there is no merit in your act. If you delight in being kind to others, and help them because you love them, you are not moral. If, however, you have no such inclination, or if you have an antipathy against doing it, and still aid others from a sense of duty, then you are moral.[1]

Of course, in a matter of this kind everything depends upon one's standpoint. If the criterion of morality is the sense of duty, or obligation, then, to be sure, no act can be moral that is not prompted by reverence for the law. But it is begging the entire question to insist upon this thesis. Do we really call only such acts moral as are held by Kant to be

[1] See Kant's *Metaphysik der Sitten.*

moral? If we do, we must regard as moral the murderer who acts from a sense of duty. No, Kant would object, you cannot call the murderer moral, nor can he call himself moral, because he cannot will that his conduct become universal law. Well, we ask, why not? Why cannot he will that the killing of tyrants become universal, so long as it is prompted by a sense of duty? Besides, Kant here introduces a new principle or criterion: the fitness of the act to become a universal maxim. First he says that an act is moral when it is prompted by the sense of duty, then he tells me to "act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law." If he adheres to the first proposition, the murderer is moral; if to the second, then the sense of duty is not the criterion; if to both, we have either a contradiction or two criteria which must be harmonized in some way.[1]

The main thing, it seems to me, is that a man do the right. Now, if he does it from inclination, because he loves to do it, why should he not be adjudged moral? Spencer believes that the time will come when the sense of duty or moral obligation will pass away. "The observation is not infrequent," he says, "that persistence in performing a

[1] For criticism of the Kantian view, see Paulsen, *Ethics*, pp. 350 ff.; Janet, *Theory of Morals*, Bk. III, chap. v; Mackenzie, *Manual of Ethics*, chap. iv; Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*, § 56; Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, IV.

duty ends in making it a pleasure; and this amounts to the admission that, while at first the motive contains an element of coercion, at last this element of coercion dies out, and the act is performed without any consciousness of being obliged to perform it."[1] It is evident, then, that "that element in the moral consciousness which is expressed by the word obligation will disappear." However this may be, I see no reason why a man should be called non-moral because he loves to do the right.

Of course, the feeling of obligation, the feeling that an act ought to be performed, will be a great incentive to the doing of it, and possibly owes its existence to this fact. A man in whom this sentiment is very strong will do the right in the face of the strongest temptations, provided, of course, the feeling is connected with right actions. It is an excellent reënforcer of morality; it pushes itself in between the desire to violate the law and the desire to obey it, and helps the latter to gain the victory. Humanity instinctively recognizes this truth. In times of moral degeneracy, reformers point out the danger of listening to the seductive voice of inclination, and appeal to the sense of duty. It is also to be observed that we love conflict, and admire the man who struggles. There is nothing dramatic in an

[1] *Data of Ethics*, p. 128. Aristotle, *Ethics*, Bk. I, chap. x: "For it may be added that a person is not good if he does not take delight in noble actions, as nobody would call a person just if he did not take delight in just actions," etc.

even, quiet life that is free from storms of passion and temptation. But the sense of duty does not play the rôle in life which moralists of Kant's pietistic training assign to it. Life is not a continuous conflict between our inclinations, desires, or impulses, and the sense of duty. If it were, it would soon consume itself. Men do not do everything from a sense of duty, or because they feel that they *must*. Men are trained to righteousness, and then act from force of habit. Where the training is complete, character is formed, and acts follow from character. The conflicts which Kant regards as forming the very essence of character are rare in a healthy moral life. A good man does not have to call out the inner police force every time he acts. An appeal to authority is not always necessary in his case. The "thou shalt" is superseded by the "I will," and the rule of law gives way to the rule of love.[1]

Many men form ideals of conduct, that is, reach certain general principles, which aim to give their life a unity. The ideal is like the flag that leads the hosts to battle. It may be followed for many reasons, from love, or from a sense of obligation, or

[1] See Spencer, *Inductions*, p. 338; Münsterberg, *Ursprung der Sittlichkeit*, last chapter; Wundt, *Ethik*, Part III, chap. iii: "Whereas a moral law which demands that the good be done without inclination, *i.e.*, without motives, asks more than can be accomplished, it is, on the contrary, the genuine mark of the mature character to perform the moral act, without deliberation, from pure inclination."

from force of habit. I compare my acts with this ideal and may feel *obliged* to perform those agreeing with it, or I may do them from love. Often a line of reasoning is required to discover the acts which are necessary to the realization of my ideal.

12. *The Historical View and Morality.*—In conclusion, I should like to consider an objection which is frequently urged against the historical view of conscience by those who regard the moral faculty as of supernatural origin. They hold that to deny the supernatural character of conscience is to rob it of its sacredness and authority. When we know *that* and *how* a thing has originated, we are apt to lose respect for it. The knowledge that conscience is not a descendant of the gods, but an earth-born child, a plebeian, so to speak, deprives it of the respect necessary to make it effective, and renders it less *awe*ful than before. Hence, these persons hold, the historical view of conscience is dangerous to morality.[1]

We reply: (1) Even if all this were so, it would not affect the truth of the teaching. Truth is one thing, expediency another.

(2) But why should the belief that conscience is a child of nature and not the direct voice of God make us lose respect for morality? If I believe in God and believe that He is a good God, I shall surely

[1] Even Guyau, an evolutionist, is of the same opinion: "The scientific spirit," he says, "is the enemy of all instinct; it tends to destroy the sense of obligation on which instinct is based. Every instinct disappears upon consciousness."

believe that He is in favor of the law, that it is His will that I obey the law. And what is to hinder me from believing that His voice speaks in the experience of the race, that the voice of the people is the voice of God in moral matters, that mankind ultimately hit upon the right and transmit their knowledge from generation to generation? When the theory of evolution first appeared, it was attacked as dangerous to morality and religion, on the ground that if man grew out of simple beginnings and was not directly created by God, then there would be no need of a God. We are coming to understand, however, that even if the evolutionistic hypothesis should be true, God could still reign. Why could not God, instead of having made man out of clay and having breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, have created simple elements from which a being like man eventually had to evolve? The latter belief is surely as reasonable as the former. And so, too, why can we not believe, if we wish, that God made a universe which was bound to produce a human consciousness and a human conscience? Why should not God let soul-life grow as He lets plant-life grow, and why should we not admire a conscience that has been produced naturally as much as we admire other products of nature?

(3) Even if an insight into the origin of the ought-feeling could lead to the elimination of the feeling, would that mean the overthrow of morality?

I do not believe it. If the habitual performance of good deeds ends in their being done joyfully, why should not a person learn to do the right because he loves to do it? And if he can do it from love, why should the loss of the sense of duty mean the defeat of all righteousness? Moreover, the man who is intelligent enough to understand the arguments which make for the historical view, will, at the same time, be intelligent enough to see that morality serves a purpose in the world, that the rules of conduct are not mere arbitrary commands, but that they represent the necessary means of human existence. And if he believes that, why should he despise morality? Nay, would he not be more inclined to uphold the right than before? I believe that the race could not exist without morality, I believe that I could not live and grow in an environment in which the laws of morality are constantly broken, I believe that the universe is so arranged that immorality cannot thrive in it in the long run, — then why should I become immoral simply because I have discovered that the voice within me which urges me in the direction of the right was not made in a day and that it will tell me better things as the world rolls on?[1]

[1] Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics:* "The Utilitarian must repudiate altogether that temper of rebellion against the established morality, as something purely external and conventional, into which the reflective mind is always apt to fall when it is first convinced that its rules are not intrinsically reasonable. He must, of course, also repudiate as superstitious that awe of it as an absolute or Divine code

(4) There are no *a priori* reasons why a person who understands the genesis of his moral nature should lose it. Nor do the facts, which after all furnish the most important testimony, prove that such is the case. I do not believe that the advocates of the historical theory, men like the Mills, Darwin, Spencer, Wundt, Höffding, and Paulsen, are less moral than Kant and Martineau. An insight into its genesis no more destroys conscience than an understanding of the psychology of courage makes a man cowardly, or a knowledge of the conditions of sight and hearing makes a man blind and deaf. It is not an easy thing to break down the training of a lifetime.[1] It would require systematic efforts to loosen the association between the

which intuitional moralists inculcate. (At the same time this sentiment, which Kant, among others, has expressed with peculiar force, is in no way incompatible with Utilitarianism: only it must not attach itself to any subordinate rules of conduct.) Still, he will naturally contemplate it with reverence and wonder, as a marvellous product of nature, the result of long centuries of growth, showing in many parts the same fine adaptation of means to complex exigencies as the most elaborate structures of physical organisms exhibit: he will handle it with respectful delicacy as a mechanism, constructed of the fluid element of opinions and dispositions, by the indispensable aid of which the actual quantum of human happiness is continually being produced, a mechanism which no 'politicians or philosophers' could create, yet without which the harder and coarser machinery of Positive Law could not be permanently maintained, and the life of man would become — as Hobbes forcibly expresses it — 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.' "

[1] See Turgénev's novels, *New; Fathers and Sons;* and Dostoievski's *Crime and Punishment.*

ideas of certain modes of conduct and the moral sentiments. Why should the philosopher who understands the utility of these feelings attempt to eradicate them? Nay, will he not rather seek to develop and to strengthen them, to attach them to forms of conduct which his growing intelligence finds to be the best?

Our philosophical and theological beliefs have, as Paulsen points out, much less influence on our actions than is commonly supposed. Many men who honestly believe in conscience as the voice of God, and who believe that there is a future life in which the just will be rewarded and the unjust punished, act as though they had neither conscience nor fear of hell. Conduct depends upon character, character depends upon impulses, feelings, and ideas together, not on ideas alone. Train a child properly, work moral habits into his very nature, arouse in him a fellow-feeling for all mankind, and you may turn him loose upon the world without fear. If, however, you tell him that he must obey the moral law simply because it is God's will, and for no other reason, then, if he ever loses his faith in God, his morality will be without support, and he will disregard the law simply to prove his freedom and enlightenment.

CHAPTER IV

THE ULTIMATE GROUND OF MORAL DISTINCTIONS[1]

1. *Conscience as the Standard.* — Our first question was, Why do men judge or evaluate as they do in morals? Why do they call acts right and wrong? We answered this question psychologically, that is, we pointed out the psychical states upon which moral judgment depends. We found that certain feelings cluster around certain ideas of acts, and that it is in virtue of these feelings that we pronounce moral judgments. We embraced all these mental conditions of moral judgment under the term *conscience*, and declared that men judge as they do because they have a conscience. We also examined the views of the different schools with regard to the innateness of conscience, and came to the conclusion that conscience is neither original in the human soul in the sense in which the intuitionists take it, nor the product of individual experience, as their opponents hold, but that there is an element of truth in both schools. We agreed with the former in saying that conscience is an intuition, with the latter, that it has an origin and development.

But we are not yet satisfied with the results which we have reached. Men judge as they do because

[1] See references under chap. v.

they have a conscience. They call an act right or wrong because conscience tells them so. But, we ask, why does conscience tell them so? Why do the feelings of approval (and disapproval) and the ought-feeling surround the ideas of certain acts? Because our parents and teachers, present and past, have made the connection for us? But who made the connection for them? What is the principle which originally governed the process? What is the *ultimate* reason or ground why certain acts are judged as they are judged? In other words, what is the ultimate ground of moral distinctions, why is right right, and wrong wrong? What in the last analysis makes it right or wrong? Why is it right to tell the truth, and wrong to lie and steal?

2. *The Theological View.* — Simply because God has willed it, answers one school, which was founded by the mediæval schoolmen, Duns Scotus and William Occam. God has made the connection spoken of before. Stealing and lying are wrong because God has arbitrarily decreed them to be so. Had He, as He might and could have done, declared them to be right, then stealing and lying would be right. "God does not require actions because they are good," says the old schoolman Gerson, "but they are good because He requires them; just as others are evil because He forbids them."[1] We might, if we chose, call this the *theological* school.

[1] See Janet, *Theory of Morals*, translated by M. Chapman, p. 167; Lecky, *History of European Morals*, pp. 17 ff. According

3. *The Popular View.* — No, says another class of thinkers, an act is right or wrong *intrinsically*. It is absurd to ask why lying and stealing are wrong. Moral truths are as self-evident as the axioms of geometry. We might as well ask why twice two are four as ask why stealing is wrong. The ethical rules are *absolutely* true, they are necessary truths; we cannot possibly withhold our assent from them, and yet we cannot prove them. And as God is bound by the truths of mathematics and cannot make twice two anything but four, so He is bound by the moral law and cannot make stealing right.[1] An act is right or wrong because conscience tells me so, and conscience tells me so because it is so. Behind the dicta of conscience we cannot go.[2] Let us call this school the *popular* or *common-sense* school.

4. *The Teleological View.* — But the scientific instinct is too strong in man to be silenced by such dogmatic assertions as the foregoing. The philosophical thinker demands reasons, and is not to be put off with words. He is apt to begin at the very point where the popular mind abandons the search as useless or impossible. We desire to know why an act is right, what makes it right, and receive the dogmatic reply that it is right in itself, that it is *absolutely* right, that there is no reason for its being

to Descartes, the will of God makes all moral distinctions; He could make good bad. See his *Meditations*, "Answer to the Sixth Objection."

[1] See Thomas Aquinas and his school.

[2] See the rational intuitionists discussed in chap ii, § 3.

right beyond the fact that conscience dictates it, or that it is right because God wills it: *car tel est son bon plaisir!* Now we are willing to admit that conscience dictates it, and that what conscience dictates is for the time being right. And we are also willing to admit that it is the will of God. But we would know why conscience speaks as it does, what has guided it in its deliverances, what is the principle or criterion or standard underlying its judgments. There must be some ultimate ground for the distinctions which it makes. And if God made right right and wrong wrong, we would know why He did it, why He made stealing wrong, what reason He had for doing it, what purpose He had in view when He willed it. Wherever we find an instinct we investigate and seek to explain it, to discover its *raison d'être* if it has any. I ask, Why do we eat and drink and sleep; and you tell me with a contemptuous smile, Because we are hungry and thirsty and tired, which, though perfectly true, does not answer my question at all. I desire to know the *raison d'être* of eating and drinking and sleeping, the purposes aimed at and realized by these functions, the principles on which they rest.

5. *Arguments for Teleology.* — Let us see whether we cannot find a reason for our question, What is the ultimate ground of moral distinctions? Why is it right to tell the truth, and wrong to lie and steal? The following reflections may suggest the answer: —

(1) Every willed action has some end in view. We desire to realize a purpose. Indeed, all action tends to realize an end or purpose, even instinctive and automatic action. It lies in the very nature of things that acts and motives should produce results. Now if human conduct is willed by man, and if the will always aims at results, it is to be supposed that moral conduct aims at results, that it realizes ends or purposes which are desired by man. And we should not go far amiss in saying that these results or effects are the *raison d'être*, the reason for existence, of moral conduct.

(2) When we reflect upon the modes of conduct which our age calls right and wrong, we find that those which are called right or good uniformly produce effects different from those which are called wrong or bad, and that the effects of the former are preferred, desired, and approved, while the effects of the latter are disliked and disapproved. Falsehood, calumny, theft, treachery, murder, etc., produce results which we call pernicious and evil; truthfulness, honesty, loyalty, benevolence, justice, produce consequences of a beneficial nature. The universe is so arranged that certain acts are bound to have certain effects, and human nature is so constituted that some effects are desired and others hated. The act of murder carries countless evils in its train: the destruction of the victim and his life's hopes, feelings of grief and desires for revenge in the hearts of the related survivors, general sorrow

and a feeling of insecurity in the entire community. The family of the murdered man may also suffer material loss by the removal of their supporter, while other circles are indirectly affected by their misfortune. The murderer himself cannot live the life of peace and security which he enjoyed before the crime. He has drawn upon himself the wrath of his fellows, not to speak of the legal punishment which may stare him in the face. The mark of Cain is upon him, the blood of his victim cries for revenge, men fear him and hate him, and he fears and hates them in return. Such and many kindred effects are bound to follow the commission of crime even in the most primitive state of society. And it would be impossible for men to live together in a community in which acts having such effects were habitually practised. A society cannot thrive whose members lie and steal and commit murder and otherwise disregard each other, in which the wicked are not punished and wrongs redressed, in which even thieves and rascals fall out. Now would it not be safe to assume that these effects, both internal and external, are the significant thing in morals?

(3) We also notice that whenever our conscience leaves us in the lurch, and fails to indicate the proper course to pursue, we frequently attempt to reason about our conduct. What, we ask ourselves, would be the effect of such and such an act upon ourselves and others and society at large? I may fully approve of a line of action which I have been pursuing and

which everybody else commends, until some day it dawns upon me that my behavior is bound to harm myself and others, in which case I alter my judgment. And in urging others to be moral we frequently point out to them the effects which accompany both right- and wrong-doing. We seem to be anxious to justify the law by its effects. Saint Paul says: "If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended or is made weak."[1] That is, do not do certain things because of the effect of your example. We also often try to influence children, who do not always see into the so-called self-evidence of the moral law, by showing them the effects of right and wrong. Moreover, we are sometimes advised to do right on the ground that God wills our good, and that this is realized by the moral law.

(4) When we study the morality of different races and ages, we observe that certain modes of conduct are insisted on which are especially adapted to the conditions, both inner and outer, of the times. Where men dwell together in families or clans, and care only for those related to them, the chief concern seems to be to ward off the attacks of other families and tribes. In such a state blood-revenge is a sacred duty, and disloyalty to the clan a heinous

[1] *Romans*, xiv, 14–23.

crime. In societies of a larger growth surrounded by warlike neighbors, obedience to authority and martial courage are the highest virtues. Such acts are commanded and judged as moral which enable the community to live and to maintain and increase its possessions. Whatever hinders it from realizing this purpose is condemned. Child murder is often looked upon as legitimate where additions to the membership of the tribe are regarded as dangerous to its welfare. Aged adults are killed without compunction when their presence becomes a burden. Sickly infants and some of the female offspring are put to death or exposed lest they hamper the tribe in the struggle for life. For the ancient Greek as well as the ancient Hebrew, the strength of the State was the all-important thing. The moral code of such peoples embraces forms of conduct which we shudder at, but which will be found, upon investigation of all the conditions, to have had their reason for existence. Men like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, whom we may surely regard as high types of Grecian morality, regarded as right and proper customs which we condemn, but which seemed to them essential to the existence of the State.[1] Plato speaks of the exposure of children with as little concern as we should feel at the kill-

[1] See Plato's *Republic;* Aristotle's *Politics;* Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece;* Spencer, *Inductions of Ethics;* Rée, *Entstehung des Gewissens;* Williams, *A Review of Evolutional Ethics;* Sutherland, *The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct.*

ing of a dog. Aristotle justifies slavery on the ground of its necessity, and jestingly declares that slavery will be abolished as soon as the shuttle-cocks in the looms begin to move themselves.

(5) When we investigate the subject-matter of the moral law, we notice certain discrepancies which cannot be explained except on the theory that the effect of the act is the important thing. The law says, Thou shalt not kill either thyself or other human beings. It is wrong to take human life. And yet according to the popular conscience the State has the right to execute criminals, and an individual may kill a fellow in self-defence. Nor is killing in war regarded as reprehensible. It is right for a nation to defend itself when attacked, or to attack another nation that is meditating its destruction. Suicide is generally condemned as wrong, and yet we do not blame Arnold von Winkelried, who gathered to his breast the spear-points of the enemy in order to open a path for his followers.

The law says, Thou shalt not lie. But we do not find fault with the physician for deceiving his patients for their own good, nor with the general for deluding the enemy, nor with the officer of the law for not always telling the truth to the murderer whom he wishes to entrap.

In all these cases modes of conduct are prohibited which have certain harmful effects. They all represent forms of action which endanger life. And yet these same modes of conduct are allowed in certain

instances; apparently because the usual results attendant upon them do not appear, or because an insistence upon their performance would have still more serious consequences than the abrogation of the law.

From the above, it seems to me, we may safely infer that the ultimate ground of moral distinctions lies in the *effects* which acts tend to produce. Such acts as actually tend or are believed to produce consequences desired by mankind come to be regarded as good or right, and are enjoined as duties, while their opposites are condemned and prohibited. The effect or end or purpose which an act tends to realize must, in the last analysis, be what gives to it its moral worth. It must be this end or purpose which, in some way or another, has prompted man to *evaluate* as he does. This it must be which constitutes the ground or principle or standard or criterion of moral codes. In other words, morality is a means to an end; its utility or purposiveness is its standard.

6. *Teleological Schools.* — Let us call this view, which regards the utility or purposiveness or *teleology* (from the Greek word, τέλος, *tĕlŏs*, end, purpose) of morality as its ground, the *teleological* view.[1] According to it such acts are good or right

[1] The Latin word for useful is *utilis*. We might therefore call the school which regards the utility of conduct as the criterion of its moral worth, the *utilitarian* school. But, as we shall see later on, this term has been appropriated by a particular branch or phase of the school. To avoid confusion, therefore, we shall follow the usage introduced by Paulsen, and employ the term *teleological*.

as tend to produce certain results or effects, or to realize a certain end. Here the question naturally arises, What is the end or purpose which morality realizes or seeks to realize? Different answers have been given: —

(1) Morality conduces to pleasure or happiness; it is the pleasure-giving quality of an act that makes it good. The Greek word for pleasure is ἡδονή (*hēdŏnē*). Hence we may call this view the pleasure-theory, or *hedonism*.[1] It declares that acts are good or bad according as they tend to produce pleasure or pain.

But, we ask, Pleasure for whom? My pleasure or your pleasure? (*a*) Mine, say some. Acts are good or bad because they tend to make me happy or unhappy. This is *egoistic* (from Greek ἐγώ, Latin *ego* = I), or *individualistic hedonism*.

(*b*) No, say others, acts are good or bad according as they tend to give pleasure or pain to *others*. This is *heteristic* (ἕτερος, *hĕtĕrŏs*, other) or *altruistic* (Latin *alter*, other), or *universalistic hedonism*.[2]

(2) According to other teleologists, the principle

[1] The Greek word for happiness is εὐδαιμονία (*eudæmonia*). Hence the theory is often called *eudæmonism*.

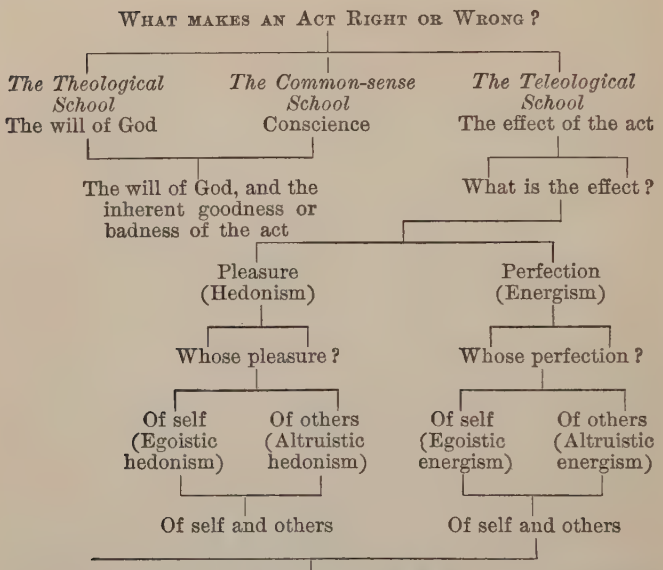
[2] Called by John Stuart Mill *utilitarianism*. Mill's utilitarianism is universalistic hedonism. He applies the general, or generic, term to a particular species, and identifies utilitarianism with a particular phase of it. It is for this reason, as we stated before, that we prefer to use the term *teleology*. The term *utilitarianism*, owing to Mill's use of it, means, in most persons' minds, universalistic hedonism, which, of course, is not the only possible teleological school.

of morality is not pleasure or happiness, but the preservation of life, "virtuous activity," welfare, development, progress, perfection, realization. We might call the adherents of this school anti-hedonists, or according to their more positive tenets, vitalists (*vita*, life), perfectionists, realizationists, or *energists*.[1] The energists or perfectionists hold that acts are good which tend to preserve and develop human life. We may have here, as above: (*a*) *egoistic* or *individualistic energism;* and (*b*) *altruistic* or *universalistic energism*. According to the former, the end of morality is the preservation and development of individual life; according to the latter, of the life of the species.

7. *Summary.* — The following table attempts to summarize the views mentioned in this chapter[2]: —

[1] A term employed by Paulsen, derived from the Greek ἐνέργεια (*energeia*), energy, work, action. The advocates of this view are also called eudæmonists by some. The word *eudæmonia* means happiness, but for Aristotle and others happiness is identical with virtuous activity. The different senses in which this word *eudæmonia* is used by different writers often causes confusion.

[2] These views are by no means, as is usually supposed, necessarily antagonistic to each other. The statements, An act is right or wrong because conscience tells me so, and An act is right or wrong because of the effects it tends to produce, do not necessarily exclude each other. They can both be true. Similarly, the statements, An act is right or wrong because God wills it to be so, and An act is right or wrong because conscience tells me so, and An act is right or wrong because its effects make it so, can be easily harmonized. See chap. v, §§ 1, 11, 12.



Theologico-Teleological School: An act is good or bad because God wills it, and God wills it because of its effects.

CHAPTER V

THE TELEOLOGICAL VIEW[1]

BEFORE attempting to discuss the problems suggested in the last chapter, let us examine a little more carefully our fundamental thesis that the moral worth of acts ultimately depends upon the effects which they naturally tend to produce, and consider some objections which may be urged against it.

1. *Conscience and Teleology.* — When we say that the end which morality subserves is its ground or reason for being, we do not mean to imply that the agent always has the end or purpose clearly in

[1] Advocates of the Teleological View: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics;* Butler, *Sermons upon Human Nature;* Hutcheson, *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Virtue and Beauty;* Hume, *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals;* Paley, *Moral Philosophy;* Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii; Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, chaps. i–iii; Stephen, *Science of Ethics*, chaps. iv–v; Höffding, *Ethik*, chap. vii; Jhering, *Der Zweck im Recht*, Vol. II, pp. 95 ff.; Wundt, *Ethics*, Part III, chaps. ii–iv; Paulsen, *Ethics*, pp. 222 ff.; Sutherland, *The Moral Instinct*, especially Vol. II, pp. 32 ff.; and all the thinkers mentioned in next two chapters. Opponents of the Teleological View: Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten*, Abbott's translation, pp. 9 ff.; Lecky, *History of European Morals*, chap. i; Bradley, *Ethical Studies;* Martineau, *Types*, Vol. II; Spencer, *Social Statics*, first edition.

view.[1] We have already pointed out in our chapter on conscience that he pronounces judgment upon an act *immediately* or instinctively, so to speak, that he calls the act right or wrong because his conscience tells him so. He may not be *conscious* of the utility of the act which he approves or feels himself *obliged* to perform. Our theory does not at all assert that he performs acts *because of* their effects. Moral acts are not necessarily prompted by the conscious desire on part of the doer to produce certain consequences. We eat without being conscious of the utility of eating and without intending to preserve our bodies, but because we feel hungry. Still, we may say, and have the right to say, that the taking of nourishment produces beneficial results, and that these constitute the reason or ground for our taking food.[2] There is no contradiction whatever between the statement that we call stealing wrong because we *feel* it to be wrong, or because conscience tells us so, and the statement that stealing is wrong because of its effects. In the former case we give the *psychological* reason or ground for the wrongness

[1] See Stephen, *The Science of Ethics*, chap. iv, ii, "The Moral Law." See also *supra*, p. 72, note 3.

[2] See Williams, *A Review of Evolutional Ethics*, pp. 326 ff. See Butler, *Human Nature:* "It may be added that as persons without any conviction from reason of the desirableness of life, would yet, of course, preserve it merely from the appetite of hunger; so, by acting merely from regard (suppose) to reputation, without any consideration of the good of others, men often contribute to public good."

of the act; in the latter we point out the *real* reason.

It is just as easy and just as hard, in the last analysis, to explain why we should perform certain acts without being conscious of their utility, why we should feel obliged to pursue certain modes of conduct, the purpose of which turns out to be useful, without being conscious of their purposiveness, as it is to tell why animals should feel impelled to do the very things which they ought to do in order to preserve life, without knowing anything of the end or purpose realized by their impulses. The attempts which have been made to account for this apparently pre-established harmony in the latter case greatly resemble those employed to explain the former. According to some, God has implanted certain ideas and feelings in the soul of the bird for the purpose of enabling it to do what it does. It knows what is good for it, because God has given it a faculty of knowing it. Others simply declare that instincts are innate capacities for acting in a certain useful way. Still others try to explain them as the results of a long line of development, as products of evolution; but in every case the utility of the instinct is confessed to be the ground of the animal's possessing it.

The fact that conscience prescribes acts which are useful, without knowing of their usefulness, is accounted for in the same ways, as we have already seen.[1] According to some, God has given us a

[1] See chap. ii.

faculty by means of which we immediately discover useful acts.[1] We, however, prefer to say, as we said before, that conscience is a development, and grows with its environment. The race learns by experience that certain acts make happy and peaceful living together impossible, while others tend to create relations of harmony and good will, and gradually evolves a code of morals which, in a measure at least, tends to preservation or happiness, or whatever the end may be. These modes of conduct, which must be strictly enforced, become habitual or customary, and are surrounded with the feelings — all the way from fear of retaliation to pure obligation — which we noticed before.[2] By the side of these feelings, which are more or less intense and easily hold the attention, the real purpose of the rules is lost sight of. Of course, it is not to be supposed that primitive societies carefully reasoned out the possible effects of certain conduct and then adopted a particular end or purpose by an act of parliament. But we may imagine, I believe, that the primitive man had sense enough to find out when he was hurt, and when he hurt some one else, and that in order to live at all every one had to have some regard for every one else. Humanity did not solve the problem of adapt-

[1] Thus, Hutcheson says: "Certain feelings and acts are intuitively recognized as good; we have a natural sense of immediate excellence, and this is a supernaturally derived guide. All these feelings and acts agree in one general character, — of tending to happiness." See also Paley, *Moral Philosophy*.

[2] See chap. iii.

ing itself to its surroundings in a day; indeed, it is far from having mastered the subject even in the enlightened present.

The objection, then, that individuals are not always conscious of the ultimate ground of moral distinctions[1] does not affect our theory at all. We can without difficulty explain both the immediacy with which moral judgments are uttered, and the ignorance of the agent with reference to the end or purpose upon which the law is based.

2. *Categorical and Hypothetical Imperatives.* — Closely connected with this objection is the one that the teleological theory cannot explain the absoluteness of the moral law. The law, it is asserted, commands categorically or unconditionally, Thou shalt, Thou shalt not; and is apparently utterly regardless of ends or effects or experience. We answer, in the first place, that the so-called categorical imperative is the expression in language of the feeling of obligation within us, which speaks peremptorily, and that when we have explained this feeling we have explained the categorical imperative. Secondly, the teleological view will have to regard this imperative in the same light in which it views all imperatives or rules or commands or prescriptions. The claim of the teleological school is that acts are good or bad, right or wrong, according to the effects which they tend to produce.[2] Stealing,

[1] See first edition of Spencer's *Social Statics.*

[2] See, for example, Mill's *Utilitarianism*, p. 9.

lying, murder, cruelty, are wrong because they produce effects quite different from honesty, kindness, benevolence, etc. Moral rules, like all other rules, have a purpose in view; they command a certain act in order that an end may be reached. When the physician prescribes for you he lays down certain rules, the purpose or object of which is the restoration of your health. These prescriptions may be reduced to the hypothetical form, as follows: If you would get well, do thus or so. Though the physician's imperatives are peremptory or unconditional or categorical (as Kant would say) in form, though he may give no reason for them, they are virtually hypothetical in meaning. The same may be said of the moral imperatives. They are categorical in form: Thou shalt not steal; and hypothetical in meaning: If thou dost not desire certain consequences. The command, Do not steal, is not groundless or absolute or unconditional, as its form would indicate; its reason or ground, though not explicitly stated, is implied: because stealing tends to bring about certain effects.

3. *Actual Effects and Natural Effects.* — Again, the objector declares, the moral worth of an act is not dependent upon its effects; nay, it is either good or bad utterly regardless of its results.[1] Even though, owing to peculiar circumstances, the assassination of a tyrant may, all things considered, produce good effects, and the performance of a kind

[1] See Kant and Martineau, chap. ii.

deed do the opposite, still murder is wrong and benevolence right.[1]

Very true, we should say. We do not maintain that an act is right or wrong because of the effects which it *actually* produces in a particular case, but because of the effects which it *naturally tends* to produce. Arsenic is a fatal poison because it naturally tends to cause death. Sometimes the usual effect fails to appear, but we say that this is exceptional, and still regard arsenic as a fatal poison. Falsehood, calumny, theft, treachery, and murder naturally *tend* to produce evil effects, and are therefore wrong. It lies in the very nature of these modes of conduct to do harm. The universe is so arranged that certain acts are bound to have certain effects, and human nature is so constituted that some effects are desired, others despised. Now whether we assume that God directly gave to man certain laws, the observance of which enables him to reach ends desired by him, or whether we assume that man discovered them himself, the fact remains, that morality realizes a purpose, and that this purpose is the ground for its existence.

[1] Cardinal Newman says: "The Church holds that it were better for sun and moon to drop from the heavens, for the earth to fail, and for all the many millions who are upon it to die of starvation in extremest agony, so far as temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say should be lost, but should commit one single venial sin, should tell one wilful untruth, though it harmed no one, or steal one poor farthing without excuse." — *Anglican Difficulties*, p. 190. Compare with this Fichte's statement, "I would not break my word even to save humanity."

Besides, it would be very difficult to prove that the slaying of the tyrant had no evil effects, and the benevolent deeds no good ones. Human nature is so constituted that the commission of a crime like murder cannot fail to do harm. The experience of mankind shows that the results of such a deed are baneful, and you can hardly prove that they will be absent in a particular case. Who can say that the murder of Julius Cæsar, or of Alexander II of Russia, or even of Caligula, was a blessing? Who would be willing to live in a society in which even the killing of tyrannical governors became the rule?

4. *A Hypothetical Question Answered.* — But, the common-sense moralist insists, even though murder and theft naturally tended to produce effects opposite to those which they now produce, they would still be wrong. The teleologist would answer: I cannot imagine such a state of affairs in a world constituted like ours. As things go here, these forms of conduct cannot help producing effects which humanity condemns. Still, for the sake of argument, I will suppose your case. And let me first ask you a question. Would charity and honesty and loyalty and truthfulness still be virtues if they led to the overthrow of the world, if they caused sorrow and suffering, if they destroyed the life and progress and happiness of mankind? It does not seem plausible, does it? If murder and theft and falsehood really tended to produce opposite effects, mankind would not have condemned them. If murder were life-

giving instead of death-dealing, it would no longer be murder, that is all. Moreover, were mankind so constituted as to prefer death to life, it would not insist upon acts which make life and happiness possible.

5. *Morality and Prosperity.* — Yet if your view is correct, our opponents assert, then the most moral man and the most moral nation should live and thrive. But is this always the case? Nay, is not the reverse true?[1] We can answer, that, generally speaking, obedience to the laws of morality insures life and happiness, and that "the wages of sin is death." But, just as a man who observes the rules of hygiene may become sick and die, so a moral individual and a moral nation may perish. Eating tends to preserve life, but yet eating men die. An earthquake may swallow the most moral community in existence, and still its morality was the condition of its peaceful and happy life.

6. *Imperfect Moral Codes.* — If utility is the criterion of morality, why do we find so many harmful and indifferent acts enjoined in the moral codes of peoples? Why do men adhere with such tenacity to customs which, so far as we can see, have no *raison d'être?*

We answer: (*a*) Certain acts were *believed* to have good effects, and so came to be invested with the authority of the law; others were believed to have bad effects, and were prohibited. As we said

[1] Gallwitz, *Problem der Ethik in der Gegenwart.*

before, ignorance and superstition play an important part in the making of moral codes. If human beings were all-wise and unprejudiced, the code might perhaps be perfect; but as men are fallible, they cannot solve the problems of morality with absolute perfection. The belief in invisible powers led to many superstitious practices which we should call immoral, but which were imagined to be productive of good to the race. Many tribes offered human sacrifices to their gods, who reflected the moral nature of their chiefs, in order to satisfy the hunger of the deities, to appease their wrath, or to gain their good will.[1] After such practices have once become customary, they are clothed with the authority of conscience, and felt to be right. The Hindoo mother who throws her children into the river or is buried alive in the grave of her husband obeys the law of her tribe, and believes that somehow some good is going to come of it.

(*b*) Where we have a low grade of intelligence in nations, we are apt to have what we of the present would call a low grade of morality. And similarly, where we have the feeling of sympathy undeveloped, we find modes of conduct which are abhorrent to a person of wider and deeper sympathies. Certain cruel practices are due to this fact. When the race grows more intelligent and its sym-

[1] See Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 266; Spencer, *Inductions of Ethics;* Williams, *Evolutional Ethics;* Rée, *Entstehung des Gewissens.*

pathy widens, old forms of conduct are repudiated and new ones adopted.

(*c*) Conditions, inner and outer, change and make acts harmful or harmless, which were once not so. The race, however, is conservative, and clings to the old forms from force of habit and because the moral sentiments which cluster around them cannot be eradicated all at once. Just as there are laws on our statute books which once served a useful purpose, but are now ineffective and even harmful, so there are laws inscribed on the hearts of men which have lost their reason for existence. The orthodox Jew is taught to feel a certain moral reverence for customs which were rational for the time and place where they originated, but whose usefulness is gone.

7. *Moral Reform.* — But perhaps the end realized by the several moral codes of peoples is not a truly moral one, you say; perhaps their morality is not the true morality. Very true, we answer, but it is not our purpose to give to the world a brand new moral code, but to interpret the codes already existing. It is the business of a scientific ethics to study the morality that is, to investigate the rules of conduct which men *feel* as moral, and discover the principle which gave rise to them. If we find that there is such a principle and that men tacitly assent to it, we shall understand the genesis of morals. We shall be able to see where men have bungled in their blind attempts to apply the principle, and we shall be able to distinguish more intelligently between the right

and the wrong. After we have found the ideal which is vaguely guiding the destinies of mankind, we of the present time can ask ourselves whether we are really realizing it in our conduct. We cannot, however, lay down the law to the world, nor can we evaluate the existing codes of morality, without having a principle or criterion by which to test it. If we make conscience the criterion, that is, our own individual conscience, we are bound to speak dogmatically, and must concede the same right to other consciences. We can never obtain the *consensus hominum* for our rules unless we can justify them by means of a principle which everybody tacitly accepts.

8. *The Ultimate Sanction of the Moral Law.* — But, we are asked by another objector, what validity has this principle of yours? You say that an act is good or bad because it produces effects desired or not desired by men. Why do men desire these effects? Why do they prefer certain effects to others? And why do they feel bound to bring about certain ones and to refrain from causing others? You say that morality is a means to an end, that the moral laws are grounded on their utility. Suppose we grant it, suppose we justify the particular rules by the fact that they serve a purpose. But how are we to justify this end or purpose itself?

We cannot answer. We regard certain acts as good or bad because they tend to produce certain

effects or to realize a certain end or ideal. These effects, this end, this ideal, are desired by men *absolutely*. We can give no reason for the fact that man prefers life to death or happiness to unhappiness. We can understand why having certain impulses he should come to develop modes of conduct which tend to realize them. But why he should desire what he desires is a mystery which we cannot solve. Here we have reached the bed-rock of our science, here we have a true categorical imperative which commands absolutely and unconditionally.[1]

9. *Motives and Effects.* — The point is also raised that we call a man good in spite of the evil effects which his acts naturally tend to produce, when his motives are good. If the effects constituted the measure of worth, it is held, then the agent would be called bad regardless of his motives.

[1] Hume, *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix I, v: "It appears evident that the ultimate ends of human actions can never, in any case, be accounted for by reason, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependence on the intellectual faculties. Ask a man why he uses exercise; he will answer, because he desires to keep his health; if you then inquire why he desires health, he will readily reply, because sickness is painful. If you push your inquiries farther, and desire a reason why he hates pain, it is impossible he can ever give any. This is an ultimate end, and is never referred to any other object. Something must be desirable on its own account, and because of its immediate accord or agreement with human sentiment and affection." See Paulsen, *Ethics*, especially p. 249; Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, chap. iii, § 9; Sigwart, *Vorfragen der Ethik*, pp. 11 f.; *Logic*, II, pp. 529 ff. See also § 9 (c), § 12, and beginning of chap. vi.

"We judge always the *inner* spring of action, as distinguished from its outward operation," says Martineau; or, as Bradley puts it,[1] "Acts in so far as they spring from the good will are good." And Kant holds, "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a Good Will." "A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of a proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is, it is good in itself." [2]

Let us analyze this view.

(*a*) An act is good because it is prompted by a good will. But, we ask, what is a good will? Is there any such thing as an *absolute* good will? If not, what is the criterion of its goodness? A good will is a will that is good for something, a will that tends to realize a certain end or purpose, is it not? To say that a good will is a will that wills the good, is to argue in a circle. What is the good, what is the criterion of goodness? It seems that we need a standard for judging springs of action as much as we need one for judging acts.

(*b*) No, you say, a good will is one which acts from a sense of duty or respect for the law, regardless of effects,[3] and we call him good whose will is good in this sense. But, we ask, do we really call a man good whose sense of duty prompts him to

[1] *Ethical Studies.* [2] Abbott's translation, p. 9.
[3] Kant.

commit crime? Almost every fanatic who has assassinated the ruler of a nation, from Harmodios and Aristogeiton down to the miserable wretch who took the life of the defenceless Queen Elizabeth of Austria, did so from a sense of duty. We cannot call the deeds of these pretended patriots good, even though we may believe that their motives were good, good in the sense that they intended to benefit mankind. The fact is, we judge not only the disposition or motive, but both motive and act, the person and the thing, the subject and the object. When a man's motives are good or pure, we call him *subjectively* or formally moral; when his act is good, *objectively* or materially moral.[1] To quote Paulsen's example, Saint Crispin stole leather from the rich to make shoes for the poor. His desire was to alleviate suffering, his motives were in a certain sense good. But can we approve of his conduct, or of the conduct of the political assassins who believe that the devil should be fought with his own devilish weapons? Is it right to steal from the rich to benefit the poor; is it right to commit murder even without *malice* aforethought? Why not? Because theft and murder tend to produce effects subversive of life, because it lies in the very

[1] "An act is materially good when, in fact, it tends to the interest of the system, so far as we can judge of its tendency, or to the good of some part consistent with the system, whatever were the affections of the agent." "An action is formally good when it flowed from good affection in a just proportion." — Hutcheson. See also Wundt, Paulsen, Jhering, and others.

nature of these acts to breed ruin and destruction. A man, then, may be subjectively moral and objectively immoral, and *vice versa*. But can we call him truly good or moral when there is a conflict between his motives and his deeds? Should we hold him up to the world as a model, should we admire him as much as one whose motives lead him to the performance of commendable deeds? Nay, should we not rather seek excuses for him? Think of the thousand unfortunates whom the religious fervor of our Catholic forefathers slew for the greater glory of God! We turn over the pages of the history of the Inquisition and shudder to think that the sense of duty should have allied itself with such cruelty, such heartlessness, such inhumanity.

Let us say, then, that the goodness of an act depends upon the effects which it naturally tends to produce, and the goodness of a motive depends upon its tendency to express itself outwardly in good acts. The truly good man not only desires to do right, but does it. The reason why we lay so much stress on right feeling, on the inwardliness of morality, so to speak, is that it is apt to lead to right action. The heart is the citadel of morality, and the pure in heart are apt to be pure in deed. "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also." As Leslie Stephen says: "The moral law has to be expressed in the form, 'Be this,'

not in the form 'Do this!'" "Regulate a man's feelings or his actions, and you necessarily affect his actions or his feelings. Induce a man not to hate his brother, and he will be slow to kill him; and if you persuade him not to kill, you necessarily limit to some degree the force of his hatred. As it is easier for the primitive mind to accept the objective than the subjective definition of conduct, the primitive rule takes the corresponding form, and only prescribes qualities of character indirectly by prescribing methods of conduct."[1]

(*c*) In a certain sense, however, we must confess, it is the human will which makes the act good. An act is good because of the end or purpose it realizes. This end or purpose is one desired or willed by man, and this ideal, this categorical imperative, as we called it before, is good in itself, absolutely good, that is, good in the sense that no reason can be given for its goodness. Hence we are brought back to an ultimate principle of human nature. The goodness of a particular act depends upon the effect which it tends to produce; and the goodness of a particular motive depends upon the effect which it tends to produce in action, but the effect itself is good because man wills it. Interpreted in this sense, the Kantian view cannot be escaped; in this sense nothing in this world is good except a good will, and a good will is good simply by virtue of its volition.

[1] *Science of Ethics*, chap. iv, iv. See also Wundt, *Ethics*, Vol. I, chap. i, 2 *b*, pp. 37 ff.

10. *The End justifies the Means.* — The following argument is also urged as a fatal objection to our theory:[1] According to the teleological view, it is maintained, morality is a means to an end. Hence, if the end is good, the means of realizing that end must necessarily be good, which is equivalent to saying that the end justifies the means. And if the end justifies the means, then it is right to commit crime in order to realize a good end. The practical application of this teaching is bound to lead to immorality, which in itself stamps it as false and dangerous.

These statements are full of misconceptions. The theory does not assert that *any* end which *any* person may happen to regard as good justifies *any* means which *in that person's opinion* will realize the end. It maintains that morality conduces to an end, that this end is the *highest* end, that this end, as the highest end, is tacitly desired and approved by all mankind. The correct application of such a principle cannot fail to meet the approval of the most moral man in existence. Let us go into details.

(*a*) This theory does not hold that when once a man has adopted a certain end as good he is justified in doing whatever conduces to it. Nay, we have expressly repudiated this view in our criticism of the "springs-of-action" theory.[2] Our theory does not concern itself with the temporary and particular

[1] See Paulsen, *System of Ethics*, in which it is treated in full, and to which I am largely indebted for the following paragraph.

[2] See chap. v, § 9.

desires of individuals, which may conflict with the ultimate purpose of morality. I have the right to acquire property, but I have not the right to murder and steal in order to gain my point. The amassing of wealth is not the highest end, the chief good; indeed, it is not an end in itself at all, but a means to a higher end. You may happen to believe that the advancement of a particular religious sect is the highest end, that God desires your faction to be triumphant. You may consequently regard it as right to use whatever means may benefit your sect. But you should remember, first, that your believing this does not make it so; and, secondly, that evil deeds will not in the long run benefit any cause. Teleological ethics does not say that *ends* justify means, but it can safely assert that the *highest* end, whatever that may be, justifies the means.

(*b*) Does that mean that if the highest end can be realized by murder, theft, and falsehood, then these modes of conduct are moral? We must answer, as before, that murder, theft, and falsehood tend to breed destruction, that it lies in their very nature to do so, as the experience of countless ages amply proves. Temporary advantages may, perhaps, be gained in exceptional cases by the performance of such deeds, but lasting good cannot follow wrong. Honesty is the best policy, and the devil the father of lies. The highest end cannot be attained by such means; nay, no cause can thrive on wrong.

But, you say, suppose a form of conduct which, as a rule, tends to produce pernicious effects, and is condemned, should, owing to changed conditions or special circumstances, result in good, what then? Well, we reply, if it is absolutely certain that such conduct tends to realize the end of morality, humanity will approve of it. It is wrong to take human life or to rob a man of his liberty, and yet the State inflicts the death penalty on criminals, orders its soldiers to shoot down public foes by the hundreds, confines lawbreakers in prisons, and breaks up hundreds and thousands of homes. It is right to tell the truth, and yet the general deceives the enemy and even his own army; and the physician deceives his patients in case he deems it necessary.[1] Is humanity benefited by these acts, would life and growth be impossible without them, are there no evil consequences attaching to them? We evidently believe that capital punishment tends to preserve society; otherwise we should not permit it. Should the race ever lose faith in the efficacy of this awful process, so shocking to all sympathetic natures, it would not only abolish it, but forever regret the fate of those who have died on the bloody scaffold.

(*c*) Another thing. The theory does not say that the end justifies the means which *you* or *I* may believe or think will make for the end. There is a great difference between saying that the end justi-

[1] See Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Bk. IV, Socrates's Definition of Justice.

fies the means, and, the end justifies the means which you or I believe to be the means. In order to be strictly moral, an act must actually realize the highest end. Your believing or feeling certain that it does, does not make it so.

(*d*) It seems, then, you say, that both the race and the individual may be mistaken, that they may approve of laws which do not really promote the welfare of humanity, or whatever the end may be. Exactly, we answer, such is the case. To err is human, in morals as everywhere else. Many forms of conduct have in the course of history been felt as right, which subsequent generations acknowledged to be wrong. And men have died at the stake and on the cross for offering the world a moral code for which future ages blessed their names. The sinner of to-day often becomes the saint of to-morrow.

(*e*) And now let us ask some questions ourselves. The opponents of teleology usually regard conscience as the final arbiter of conduct. A man is asked to act according to the dictates of his conscience. Now suppose it tells him to steal and kill and lie in order to accomplish what he believes to be right. Then are not falsehood and murder and stealing right? And then, does not the good end justify the means? If you say that his conscience may be mistaken, and that he should therefore not obey his conscience, you have given up your position. Besides, how shall he correct his conscience? By reflecting? Reflecting upon what? Evidently upon some principle or

criterion which is to serve as a guide even to his so-called infallible conscience.[1]

11. *Teleology and Atheism.* — The objection is also frequently raised that teleology is a godless doctrine. This is the usual stand taken by persons who can oppose no tenable arguments against a view, and yet desire in some way to confound it. By designating it as atheistic they hope to cast discredit upon it and its supporters, and to frighten others from subscribing to it. The theory, however, is no more godless than any other theory. There is nothing absurd in the thought that God established morality because of the effects which it tends to realize. It is not absurd to believe that He had a *purpose* in view in establishing it, and that this purpose is the reason for its existence. No one, it seems to me, can accuse men like Thomas Aquinas, William Paley,[2] and Bishop Butler of godlessness; and yet they found it possible to believe in teleology. Let me quote from Butler's *Sermons upon Human Nature:* "It may be added that as persons without any conviction from reason of the desirableness of life would yet, of course, preserve it merely from the appetite of hunger, so, by acting merely from regard (suppose) to reputation, without any consideration of the good of others, men often contribute to public good. In both these instances they are plainly instruments in the hands of another, in

[1] See Kant, Abbott's translation, p. 311.

[2] See chap. vi, § 10.

the hands of Providence, to carry on ends — the preservation of the individual and good of society — which they themselves have not in their view or intention." [1]

12. *Teleology and Intuitionism.* — In conclusion, I should like to emphasize the fact that there is no necessary contradiction between the theory we have advanced in the foregoing pages, and intuitionism.[2]

[1] See Mill's *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii, pp. 31 f.: "We not uncommonly hear the doctrine of utility inveighed against as a *godless* doctrine. If it be necessary to say anything at all against so mere an assumption, we may say that the question depends upon what idea we have formed of the moral character of the Deity. If it be a true belief that God desires, above all things, the happiness of His creatures, and that this was His purpose in their creation, utility is not only not a godless doctrine, but more profoundly religious than any other. If it be meant that utilitarianism does not recognize the revealed will of God as the supreme law of morals, I answer that an utilitarian who believes in the perfect goodness and wisdom of God necessarily believes that whatever God has thought fit to reveal on the subject of morals must fulfil the requirements of utility in a supreme degree. But others besides utilitarians have been of opinion that the Christian revelation was intended, and is fitted, to inform the hearts and minds of mankind with a spirit which should enable them to find for themselves what is right, and incline them to do it when found, rather than to tell them, except in a very general way, what it is; and that we need a doctrine of ethics, carefully followed out, to interpret to us the will of God. Whether this opinion is correct or not, it is superfluous here to discuss, since whatever aid religion, either natural or revealed, can afford to ethical investigation, is as open to the utilitarian moralist as to any other. He can use it as the testimony of God to the usefulness or hurtfulness of any given course of action, by as good right as others can use it for the indication of a transcendental law, having no connection with usefulness or with happiness."

[2] See chap. iv, § 7, note.

According to the teleological view, the ultimate ground of moral distinctions is to be sought in the effects which acts naturally tend to produce. That is, morality realizes a purpose, is a means to an end, and owes its existence to its utility. Intuitionism maintains that morality is intuitive, that the moral law is engraven on the heart of man, that it is not imposed upon him from without, but springs from his innermost essence.

Now these two views are by no means antithetical, as is so often declared, but may be easily harmonized. In the first place, the end realized by morality is one *absolutely* desired by human beings. An act is right because it produces a certain effect upon human nature, because, in the last analysis, humanity approves of that effect.[1] We cannot ultimately justify it except on the ground of its effect upon man. It is good because man acknowledges it as a good, because he is by nature so constituted as to be compelled to acknowledge it as a good. In a certain sense, Kant is right in saying that nothing in this world is good except a good will, and that a good will is good simply by virtue of its volition. The highest good, or the end realized by the moral law, is an absolute good, a good unconditionally desired by the human will, one for which no other ground can be found, one whose goodness inheres in itself. A particular act is good because of the end which it tends to realize, but the end is good in itself, good

[1] See chap. v, § 8, § 9 (c).

because man wills it. In this sense, there is a categorical imperative in the heart of man, an imperative that is no longer hypothetical, but unconditional.[1] In this sense, too, morality is imposed upon man by himself: it is the expression of his own innermost essence.

In the second place, we may say, as we have already said, that an act is good or bad because conscience declares it to be so.[2] The agent evaluates as he does because the contemplation of the act produces a certain effect upon his consciousness, because it arouses certain emotions in him, because conscience pronounces judgment upon it. This statement by no means contradicts the statement that the effect of the act is the *final* criterion of its moral worth. The intuitionist must grant that the acts approved by conscience produce good effects or realize the highest good for man, and that its function is to help man to attain his goal. The theological intuitionist must admit that conscience approves of forms of conduct enjoined by God on account of their consequences, that conscience is the representative of God in the human heart, placed there in order to serve the purpose of the Creator with reference to man. In every instance, conscience is supposed to serve a purpose, to accomplish something for man, to produce effects; otherwise, why should it exist? There is really no controversy between the intuition-

[1] See chap. v, § 2; also chap. ii, § 7 (1).
[2] Chap. v, § 1.

ist and the teleologist on this point. Both may agree that conscience is a means to an end, and that this end, in some way, accounts for its existence. The question concerning the origin of conscience will not necessarily affect this view. The teleologist may believe that conscience is innate, or that it is the product of experience, or that it contains both *a priori* and *a posteriori* elements, without contradicting his general theory, that morality serves a purpose in the world, and that this purpose is its final ground.

CHAPTER VI

THEORIES OF THE HIGHEST GOOD: HEDONISM[1]

1. *The Standard of Morality and the Highest Good.* — The conclusion reached in the last chapter was that the effects of acts constitute the ultimate ground of moral distinctions. Acts are, in the last analysis, right or wrong, good or bad, because of the end or purpose which they tend to realize. We have attempted to show what this means and what it does not mean. The question now confronts us, What is this end or purpose at which human conduct aims? Mankind enjoins certain modes of conduct in its moral codes, and insists upon their performance. The end realized by these must, therefore, represent what the race ultimately desires and approves; it must in a measure represent the *ideal* of the race, or a *good*. The race desires and approves of the forms of conduct embraced in the moral code, for the sake of the end realized by that code, and desires and approves of the end for its own sake. The end must be something which it desires *absolutely*, otherwise it would be no end, but a means. Our original question, What is the ground of moral distinctions, may therefore be reduced to this: What is the

[1] See references under chap. ii.

highest end, or *the highest good*, *the summum bonum?* What is it that mankind strives for, what does it prize above all else, what is its ideal?

2. *The Greek Formulation of the Problem.* — This is the form in which the ancient Greeks put the problem. They do not analyze moral facts as we do, in order to discover the principles underlying them, but simply inquire into the nature of the highest good. "Every art and every scientific inquiry," says Aristotle, at the beginning of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, "and similarly every action and purpose, may be said to aim at some good. Hence the good has been defined as that at which things aim. But it is clear that there is a difference in the ends; for the ends are sometimes activities, and sometimes results beyond the mere activities. Also, where there are certain ends beyond the actions, the results are naturally superior to the activities. As there are certain arts and sciences, it follows that the ends are also various. Thus health is the end of medicine, a vessel of ship-building, and wealth of domestic economy."[1]

"What, then, is the good in each of these instances? It is presumably that for the sake of which all else is done. This in medicine is health; in strategy, victory; in domestic architecture, a house; and so on. But in every action and purpose it is the end, as it is for the sake of the end that people all do everything else. If, then, there is a certain end of all action,

[1] Bk. I, chap. i.

it will be this which is the practicable good, and if there are several such ends it will be these. . . . As it appears that there are more ends than one, and some of these, *e.g.*, wealth, flutes, and instruments generally, we desire as means to something else, it is evident that they are not all final ends. But the highest good is clearly something final. Hence, if there is only one final end, this will be the object of which we are in search, and if there are more than one, it will be the most final of them. We speak of that which is sought after for its own sake as more final than that which is sought after as a means to something else; we speak of that which is never desired as a means to something else as more final than the things which are desired both in themselves and as a means to something else; and we speak of a thing as absolutely final, if it is always desired in itself and never as a means to something else."[1]

Let us see how this question of the highest good was answered in the past.

The question usually receives one of two answers: (1) According to one school, pleasure is the highest

[1] Bk. I, chap. v, Welldon's translation. Compare with this Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chap. i: "Questions of ultimate ends are not amenable to direct proof. Whatever can be proved to be good must be so by being shown to be a means to something admitted to be good without proof. The medical art is proved to be good by its conducing to health; but how is it possible to prove that health is good? The art of music is good for the reason, among others, that it produces pleasure; but what proof is it possible to give that pleasure is good?" See also Hume, *Principles of Morals*, Appendix I, v., quoted in note on p. 141.

good, end, or purpose; (2) according to another, it is action, or preservation, or perfection, or reason. We shall discuss the different theories in what follows, under the heads of hedonism and energism.[1]

3. *The Cyrenaics.* — Aristippus of Cyrene, who lived in the third century before Christ and founded the Cyrenaic school,[2] regards pleasure (ἡδονή) as the ultimate aim of life, for all normal beings desire it. "We are from childhood attracted to it without any deliberate choice of our own; and when we have obtained it, we do not seek anything further, and there is nothing which we avoid so much as its opposite, which is pain."[3] By pleasure he means the positive enjoyment of the moment (ἡδονὴ ἐν κινήσει), not merely repose of spirit, "a sort of undisturbedness," or permanent state of happiness. The chief good is a particular pleasure. Only the present is ours, the past is gone, the future uncertain. Therefore, "Carpe diem," "Gather the rosebuds while ye may," "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die."

But shall the pleasure be bodily or mental? Well, bodily pleasures are superior to mental ones,

[1] See chap. iv, § 6.

[2] See Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Bk. II; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.*, Bk. VII, 191–192; Ritter and Preller, *Historia Philosophiæ Græcæ*, pp. 207 ff.; Mullach, *Fragments*, Vol. II, 397 ff.; the histories of ethics, etc., mentioned under chap. ii, especially Paulsen, Seth, Sidgwick, Hyslop, Lecky, chap i. For fuller bibliographies on the thinkers mentioned in this chapter, see the histories of philosophy, especially English translation of Weber's *History of Philosophy*.

[3] Diogenes Laertius, translated in Bohn's Library, p. 89.

and bodily sufferings worse than mental. Still, every pleasant feeling (ἡδυπάθεια), whether it be physical or spiritual, is pleasure. Every pleasure as such is a good. But some pleasures are bought with great pain and are to be avoided. A man should exercise his judgment, be prudent in the choice of his pleasures. "The best thing," says Aristippus, "is to possess pleasures without being their slave, not to be devoid of pleasures."

Theodorus, a member of the same school, declares that, since you cannot always enjoy, you should try to reach a happy frame of mind (χαρά). Prudence will enable a man to obtain the pleasant and avoid the unpleasant. Pleasure, then, is the end; prudence or insight or reflection (φρόνησις), the means of getting the most pleasure out of life.

Hegesias, called πεισιθάνατος (persuader to die), the pessimist, admits that we all desire happiness, but holds that complete happiness cannot exist. Hence the chief good is to be free from all trouble and pain, and this end is best attained by those who look upon the efficient causes of pleasure as indifferent. Indeed, death is preferable to life, for death takes us out of the reach of pain.[1] Anniceris, too, considers pleasure as the chief good, and the deprivation of it as an evil. Still, a man has natural feelings of benevolence, and ought therefore to submit voluntarily to this deprivation out of regard for his friends and his country.

[1] See Cicero, *Tusc.*, 34.

4. *Epicurus.* — According to Epicurus,[1] a later advocate of hedonism, pleasure is the highest good, pain the greatest evil,[2] not, however, the positive or active pleasure of the Cyrenaics, pleasure in motion (*ἡδονὴ κινητική*), but quiet pleasure (*ἡδονὴ καταστηματική*), repose of spirit (*ἀταραξία*), freedom from pain (*ἀπονία*). The latter pleasures, which Epicurus calls pleasures of the soul, are greater than the former, those of the body; just as the pains of the soul are worse than those of the body. For the flesh is only sensible to present joy and affliction, but the soul feels the past, the present, and the future. Physical pleasure does not last as such; only the recollection of it endures. Hence, mental pleasure, *i.e.*, the remembrance of bodily pleasure, which is free from the pains accompanying physical enjoyment, is higher than physical pleasure.

Now how shall we reach the chief good? Although no pleasure is intrinsically bad, we do not choose every pleasure, for many pleasures are followed by greater pains, and many pains are followed by greater pleasures. We must exercise our judgment, we must have prudence or insight (*φρόνησις*) to

[1] 340–270 B.C. Diogenes Laertius, X; Cicero, *De finibus*, I; Lucretius, *De rerum natura;* Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.*, XI; Ritter and Preller, pp. 373 ff. See my translation of Weber, *History of Philosophy*, p. 134, note 1.

[2] "They say that there are two passions, pleasure and pain, which affect everything alive, and that the one is natural, and the other foreign to our nature; with reference to which all objects of choice and avoidance are judged of." Diogenes Laertius, English translation, p. 436; see also p. 470.

guide us in our choice of pleasures and in our avoidance of pains. "When therefore we say that pleasure is a chief good, we are not speaking of the pleasures of the debauched man, or those who lie in sensual enjoyment, as some think who are ignorant, and who do not entertain our opinions, or else interpret them perversely; but we mean the freedom of the body from pain, and of the soul from confusion. For it is not continued drinkings and revels, or the enjoyment of female society, or feasts of fish and other such things as a costly table supplies, that make life pleasant, but sober contemplation, which examines the reasons for all choice and avoidance, and which puts to flight the vain opinions from which the greater part of the confusion arises which troubles the soul." "The wise man, the man of insight, understands the causes of things, and will, therefore, be free from prejudice, superstition, fear of death, all of which render one unhappy and hinder the attainment of peace of mind."

In order to be happy, then, you must be prudent, honest, and just. "It is not possible to live pleasantly unless one also lives prudently, and honorably, and justly; and one cannot live prudently, and honestly, and justly, without living pleasantly; for the virtues are connate with living agreeably, and living agreeably is inseparable from the virtues."[1]

We see how this school develops from a crass hedonism to a somewhat more refined form of it.

[1] D. L., pp. 471 f.

At first it makes active pleasure, pleasure of a positive sort, the goal, then gradually diminishes its intensity until it becomes painlessness, repose of spirit, peace of mind, in Hegesias and Epicurus. Again, at first it is the pleasure of the moment which is sought after, then the pleasure of a lifetime is conceived as the highest good. Forethought, or prudence, is also insisted on in the course of time as a necessary means of realizing the goal.

5. *Democritus.*—All these ideas, however, had been advanced by Democritus,[1] of Abdera, the materialistic philosopher, long before the appearance of the Cyrenaics. Though this thinker is the first consistent hedonist among the ancients, and the intellectual father of Epicurus, I have placed him at the end of the exposition of ancient hedonism, because his teachings seem to me to be more matured than those of his followers.

According to Democritus, the end of life is pleasure or happiness (*εὐέστω*, *εὐθυμία*, *ἀθαυμασία*, *ἀθαμβία*, *ἀταραξία*, *ἁρμονία*, *ξυμμετρία*, *εὐδαιμονία*), by which he means an inner state of satisfaction, an inner harmony, fearlessness.[2] This feeling does not depend upon external goods, on health or sensuous pleasures.[3] In order to attain it man must use his reason. He must be moderate in his desires, because the less he desires, the less apt he is to be disap-

[1] Bibliography in *Weber*, p. 55, note 3. See especially Münz, *Vorsokratische Ethik.*

[2] *Fragments*, 1, 2, 5, 7. [3] *Ib.*, 15, 16.

pointed. He must also distinguish carefully between the different kinds of enjoyment, and select such as preserve and promote health. He must be temperate, for excess defeats itself. Again, sensuous pleasures are of short duration and require repetition, which disturbs one's peace of mind.[1] We should seek to obtain the pleasures produced by reflection and the contemplation of beautiful acts. Indeed, the best way to reach the goal is to exercise the mental powers.

All other virtues are valuable in so far as they realize the highest good, pleasure. Justice and benevolence are chief means of doing this. Envy, jealousy, and enmity create discord, which injures everybody. We should be virtuous, for only through virtue can we reach happiness.[2] But we should not only do the right from fear of punishment, since enforced virtue is likely to become secret vice. It is not enough to refrain from doing evil; we should not even desire to do it. Only by doing the right from conviction and because you desire it, can you subserve the ends of virtue and be happy.[3] Happiness, then, is the end; virtue the means of reaching it.

6. *Locke.* — Let us now look at a few pronounced modern representatives of this school. We have already seen[4] that, according to John Locke, every

[1] *Fragments*, 47, 50. [2] *Ib.*, 45, 20, 21, 26, 36.

[3] *Ib*, 117: μὴ διὰ φόβον, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν δέον χρεὼν ἀπέχεσθαι ἁμαρτημάτων.

[4] Chap. ii, § 6 (2).

one constantly pursues happiness, and desires what makes any part of it.[1] "Virtue," he says, "as in its obligation it is the will of God, discovered by natural reason, and thus has the force of law, so in the matter of it, it is nothing else but doing of good, either to oneself or others; and the contrary hereunto, vice, is nothing else but doing of harm."[2] "Thus, I think — It is man's proper business to seek happiness and avoid misery. Happiness consists in what delights and contents the mind; misery in what disturbs, discomposes, or torments it. I will therefore make it my business to seek satisfaction and delight, and avoid uneasiness and disquiet; to have as much of the one, and as little of the other, as may be. But here I must have a care I mistake not, for if I prefer a short pleasure to a lasting one, it is plain I cross my own happiness." The most lasting pleasures in life consist in (1) health, (2) reputation, (3) knowledge, (4) doing good, (5) the expectation of eternal and incomprehensible happiness in another world.[3]

7. *Butler.* — Bishop Butler, too, has hedonistic tendencies, as may be seen from certain significant passages in his sermons. "Conscience and self-love,"

[1] *Essay*, Bk. II, chap. xx, §§ 1 ff.; chap. xxi, §§ 42 ff.; Bk. I, chap. iii, § 3; Bk. II, chap. xxviii, §§ 5 ff.

[2] See passage in Locke's *Common-Place Book*, first published by Lord King, *The Life of John Locke*, pp. 292–293.

[3] Lord King, p. 304; Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, Vol. I, pp. 163–165. With this view, Leibniz (1646–1716) practically agrees. See his *New Essays*, translated by Langley, Bk. I, chap. ii, §§ 1, 3; Bk. II, chap. xx, § 2; chap. xxi, § 42; also some notes published in Erdmann's edition of his works (Duncan's translation, p. 130).

he says, "if we understand our true happiness, always lead us the same way. Duty and interest are perfectly coincident; for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance if we take in the future and in the whole; this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things."[1] "It may be allowed without any prejudice to the cause of virtue and religion, that our ideas of happiness and misery are of all our ideas the nearest and most important to us. . . . Let it be allowed, though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed consist in affection to and pursuit of what is right and good, as such, yet, that when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit, till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it."[2]

8. *Hutcheson.* — Francis Hutcheson calls an action "materially good when in fact it tends to the interest of the system, so far as we can judge of its tendency, or to the good of some part consistent with that of the system, whatever were the affections of the agent." "An action is formally good when it flowed from good affection in a just proportion." But what is the good? "That action is best which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers, and worst which in like manner occasions misery."[3]

[1] Sermon iii, end. [2] Sermon xi.

[3] See Martineau, *Types*, Vol. II, pp. 514 ff.; Albee, "Shaftesbury and Hutcheson," *Phil. Review*, Vol. V, number 1.

9. *Hume.* — We have already examined David Hume's doctrine of the moral sense. We feel or perceive the rightness or wrongness of an act,[1] we feel a peculiar kind of pleasure or pain in the contemplation of characters and actions, in consequence of which we call them right or wrong. Now the question behind this is, Why does any action or sentiment, "upon the general view or survey," give this satisfaction or uneasiness?[2] In other words, what is the ultimate ground of moral distinctions? "Qualities," Hume answers, "acquire our approbation because of their tendency to the good of mankind."[3] We find that most of those qualities which we naturally approve of, have actually that tendency, and render a man a proper member of society; while the qualities which we naturally disapprove of, have a contrary tendency and render any intercourse with the person dangerous or disagreeable. Moral distinctions arise, in a great measure, from the tendency of the qualities and characters to the interests of society, and it is our concern for that interest which makes us approve or disapprove of them. Now we have no such extensive concern for society but from sympathy; and consequently it is that principle which takes us so far out of ourselves as to give us the same pleasure or uneasiness in the characters of others, as if they had a tendency to our own advantage or

[1] *Treatise on Human Nature*, Bk. III, Section II.
[2] *Ib.*, Bk. III, Section III, end.
[3] *Ib.*, Bk. III, Part III, Section I; Hyslop's *Selections*, p. 226.

loss.[1] We have a feeling for the happiness of mankind, and a resentment of their misery,[2] and everything which contributes to the happiness of society recommends itself directly to our approbation and good will.[3]

10. *Paley.*—According to William Paley, "actions are to be estimated according to their tendency. Whatever is expedient is right. It is the utility of any moral rule which constitutes the obligation of it."[4] "Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness."[5] God wills and wishes the happiness of His creatures. The method of coming at the will of God concerning any action, by the light of nature, is to inquire into the tendency of that action to promote or diminish the general happiness.[6] Happiness does not consist in the pleasures of sense, for these pleasures continue but a little while at a time, lose their relish by repetition, and are really never enjoyed because we are always eager for higher and more intense delights. Nor does happiness con-

[1] See Hyslop, p. 227; also *Treatise*, Conclusion, Section VI; also *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, especially Section V.

[2] *Inquiry*, Appendix I.

[3] *Ib.*, Part II, Section V. See also Appendix I, v, and *Treatise on Human Nature*, Bk. II, Part III, Section I: "The chief spring or actuating principle of the human mind is pleasure or pain; and when these sensations are removed, both from our thought and feeling, we are, in a great measure, incapable of passion or action, of desire or volition."

[4] *Moral Philosophy*, p. 38. [5] *Ib.*, p. 26. [6] *Ib.*, pp. 36 ff.

sist in an exemption from pain, care, business, suspense, etc., nor in greatness or rank. It consists in the exercise of social affections, exercise of our faculties, either of body or mind, in the pursuit of some engaging end, in the prudent constitution of the habits, in health. Pleasures differ in nothing but continuance and intensity.[1]

11. *Bentham.*— Jeremy Bentham also makes pleasure the end of action. "Pleasure is in itself a good, nay the only good; pain is in itself an evil, the only evil."[2] Everything else is good only in so far as it conduces to pleasure. All actions are determined by pleasures and pains, and are to be judged by the same standard. "The constantly proper end of action on the part of every individual at the moment of action is his real greatest happiness from that moment to the end of his life." What kind of pleasure shall we choose? Choose those pleasures which last the longest and are the most intense, regardless of their quality. "The quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry." In estimating the value of a pleasure or a pain, we must also consider, besides the *intensity* and *duration*, its *certainty* or *uncertainty*, its *propinquity* or *remoteness*, its *fecundity* ("or the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the *same* kind"),

[1] *Moral Philosophy*, pp. 19 ff.

[2] *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. x, Bowring's edition, p. 102; *Springs of Action*, ii, § 4; *Deontology*, Vol. I, p. 126.

or *purity* ("or the chance it has of *not* being followed by sensations of the opposite kind"), and likewise its *extent*, — that is, the number of persons to whom it *extends* or who are affected by it.[1]

My own happiness depends upon the happiness of the greatest number, *i.e.*, the conduct most conducive to general happiness always coincides with that which conduces to the happiness of the agent.[2] Hence it is to the interest of the individual to strive after the general happiness, and it is the business of ethics to point this out to him. "To prove that the immoral action is a miscalculation of self-interest, to show how erroneous an estimate the vicious man makes of pains and pleasures, is the purpose of the intelligent moralist."[3]

12. *J. S. Mill.* — John Stuart Mill[4] accepts the teaching of Bentham in a somewhat modified form. Actions are right in proportion as they tend to pro-

[1] *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. iv, pp. 29 ff. Bentham expresses his scheme in the following lines. I presume he supposed that at some future time the school children would be compelled to learn them off by heart: —

"*Intense*, *long*, *certain*, *speedy*, *fruitful*, *pure* —
Such marks in *pleasures* and in *pains* endure.
Such pleasures seek, if *private* be thy end:
If it be *public*, wide let them *extend*.
Such pains avoid, whichever be thy view:
If pains *must* come, let them extend to few."

[2] *Ib.*, chap. xvii, p. 313. [3] *Deontology.*

[4] 1806–1873. *Utilitarianism*, 1861. See also *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, by James Mill.

mote happiness; wrong, as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure.[1] Some *kinds* of pleasure, however, are more desirable and more valuable than others. Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. Now it is an unquestioned fact that those who are acquainted with all pleasures prefer those following the employment of the higher faculties. No intelligent human being would consent to be a fool, no instructed person would be an ignoramus, no person of feeling and conscience would be selfish and base, even though they should be persuaded that the fool, the dunce, or the rascal is better satisfied with his lot than they with theirs. "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool or the pig is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides."[2]

However, the standard is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether.[3] "As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him (the agent) to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii, pp. 9, 10. [2] *Ib.*, p. 14. [3] *Ib.*, p. 16.

and benevolent spectator. In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as one would be done by, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality."[1] It is noble to be capable of resigning entirely one's own portion of happiness, or chances of it; but, after all, this self-sacrifice must be for some end; it is not its own end. A sacrifice which does not increase, or tend to increase, the sum total of happiness, is wasted.[2]

But why should I desire the "greatest happiness altogether" instead of my own greatest happiness, as the standard? Mill is somewhat vague and indefinite on this point. Each person desires his own happiness. Each person's happiness is a good to that person; and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons.[3] The reasoning here seems to be this: Everybody desires his own happiness. The happiness of everybody (every particular individual) is a good to everybody (to that particular individual). Hence the happiness of everybody (that is, of all, of the whole) is a good to everybody (that is, to every particular individual).[4] A more satisfactory answer is given to the question in another place. I have a feeling for the happiness of mankind, "a regard for the pains and pleasures of

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii, p. 24. [2] *Ib.*, pp. 23 ff. [3] *Ib.*, p. 53.

[4] We have here a beautiful example of the logical fallacy of composition.

others." "This firm foundation is that of the social feelings of mankind; the desire to be in unity with our fellow-creatures, which is already a powerful principle in human nature, and happily one of those which tend to become stronger, even without express inculcation, from the influences of advancing civilization."[1] That is, I desire the happiness of others, because I have social feelings, or sympathy.

Both Mill and Bentham, therefore, agree that the greatest good of the greatest number is the goal of action and the standard of morality. But according to Bentham, self-interest is the motive, while according to Mill, sympathy or social feeling is the mainspring of morality.

There is, however, as we have seen, another point of difference between Bentham and Mill. The former regards those pleasures as the best which last the longest and are the most intense, making no qualitative distinction between them. "The quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry." Mill, on the other hand, distinguishes between the *quality* of pleasures; some are more desirable and more valuable than others, and the highest pleasures are to be preferred. "According to the Greatest Happiness Principle," he declares, "the ultimate end with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people) is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain,

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii, p. 46.

and as rich as possible in enjoyments, *both in point of quantity and quality;* the test of quality, and the rule for measuring it against quantity, being the preference felt by those who, in their opportunities of experience, to which must be added their habits of self-consciousness and self-observation, are best furnished with the means of comparison. This, being, according to the utilitarian opinion, the end of human action, is necessarily also the standard of morality; which may accordingly be defined, the rules and precepts for human conduct, by the observance of which an existence such as has been described might be, to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole of sentient creation." [1]

13. *Sidgwick and Contemporaries.* — We reach another phase of the theory in Henry Sidgwick.[2] According to him, the greatest happiness is the ultimate good.[3] By this is meant the greatest possible surplus of pleasure over pain, the pain being conceived as balanced against an equal amount of pleasure, so that the two contrasted amounts annihilate each other for purposes of ethical calculation.[4]

There are certain practical principles the truth of which, when they are explicitly stated, is manifest.[5] One of these is the *principle of rational self-*

[1] *Utilitarianism*, chap. ii, p. 17.
[2] Born 1838. *The Methods of Ethics*, 1874.
[3] *Methods*, pp. 391 ff., 409 ff. [4] *Ib.*, p. 411. [5] *Ib.*, p. 379.

love or prudence, according to which one ought to aim at one's own happiness or pleasure, as a whole; that is, reason dictates "an impartial concern for all parts of our conscious life," an equal regard for the rights of all moments, the future as well as the present, the remote as well as the near. The present pleasure is to be foregone with the view of obtaining greater pleasure or happiness hereafter. "Hereafter is to be regarded neither less nor more than Now."

Another such principle, *the principle of the duty of benevolence*, teaches that the good of any one individual is of no more importance, from the point of view of the universe, than the good of any other. One is morally bound to regard the good of any other individual as much as one's own, except in so far as we judge it to be less, when impartially viewed, or less certainly knowable or attainable. As a rational being I am bound to aim at good generally, not merely at a particular part of it. When the egoist puts forward, implicitly or explicitly, the proposition that his happiness or pleasure is good, not only *for him*, but from the point of the universe — as, *e.g.*, by saying that "nature designed him to seek his own happiness," — it then becomes relevant to point out to him that *his* happiness cannot be a more important part of good taken universally, than the equal happiness of any other person. And thus, starting with his own principle, he may be brought to accept universal happiness or pleasure as that which is

absolutely without qualification good or desirable; as an end, therefore, to which the action of a reasonable agent as such ought to be directed.[1]

Another principle is the *principle of justice;* whatever action any one of us judges to be right for himself he implicitly judges to be right for all similar persons in similar circumstances. It cannot be right for A to treat B in a manner in which it would be wrong for B to treat A; merely on the ground that they are two different individuals, and without there being any difference between the natures or circumstances of the two which can be stated as a reasonable ground for difference of treatment.[2]

Other contemporary exponents of the hedonistic school are: Alexander Bain,[3] Alfred Barratt,[4] Shadworth Hodgson,[5] Herbert Spencer,[6] Georg von Gizycki,[7] and Thomas Fowler.[8]

[1] *Methods*, p. 418. [2] p. 380.

[3] *The Senses and the Intellect*, 1856; *The Emotions and the Will*, 1859; *Mental and Moral Science*, 1868. See chap. ii, § 6 (7).

[4] *Physical Ethics*, 1869. [5] *Theory of Practice*, 2 vols., 1870.

[6] *Principles of Ethics:* Part I, "The Data of Ethics," 1879; Part II, "The Inductions of Ethics," 1892; Part III, "The Ethics of Individual Life," 1892; Part IV, "Justice," 1891. "There is no escape," says Spencer, "from the admission that in calling good the conduct which subserves life, and bad the conduct which hinders or destroys it, and in so implying that life is a blessing, and not a curse, we are inevitably asserting that conduct is good or bad according as its total effects are pleasurable or painful."—*Data of Ethics*, chap. iii, p. 28.

[7] *Grundzüge der Moral*, 1883, translated by Stanton Coit; *Moralphilosophie*, 1889.

[8] *Progressive Morality*, 1884; Fowler and Wilson, *Principles of Morality*, 1886–1887.

14. *General Survey.* — In conclusion let us briefly survey the history of the theories of hedonism, and note their development. In Greek hedonism the tendency was at first to regard bodily pleasure and the pleasure of the moment as the highest good and motive of action (Aristippus). A closer study of the problem led to the gradual modification of this conception. Instead of the pleasure of the moment, the pleasure of a lifetime; instead of violent pleasure, repose of spirit, a happy frame of mind, came to be regarded as the ideal of conduct (Theodorus, Democritus, Epicurus). The element of prudence or reason was also more strongly emphasized in the course of time. It was pointed out that happiness could not be secured without prudence or forethought; that the desire for pleasure had to be governed by reason (Democritus, Epicurus). Then it was shown that mental pleasures were preferable to bodily pleasures, that the ideal could not be realized through sensuous enjoyment, but only by the exercise of the higher intellectual faculties (Democritus, Epicurus). The commonly accepted virtues were also included among the means of happiness, and a moral life insisted on as necessary to the realization of the highest good. Indeed, the controversy between hedonism and the opposing school finally reduced itself to a dispute concerning the fundamental principle underlying morality; both schools practically recommended the same manner of life, one because it led to

happiness, the other because it tended toward perfection.[1]

Modern hedonists make the standpoint ultimately reached by the Greeks their starting-point. None of them asserts that pleasure is the highest good, without modifying the statement somewhat. The element of prudence or reason is emphasized by all. Even Bentham, who is the most radical representative of the modern school, makes the pleasure of a lifetime the end, and insists that we cannot reach this goal without exercising prudence. They would all agree, also, that the goal cannot be reached by the pursuit of sensuous pleasure, and that the exercise of the mental faculties procures the greatest happiness.

An important advance, however, is made by the modern advocates of the theory. Locke, Paley, and Bentham still incline toward *egoistic* hedonism, which was so prominent in the Greek systems; the highest good is the happiness of the individual, though this cannot be realized except through the happiness of the race. Hutcheson, Hume, J. S. Mill, and Sidgwick, on the other hand, recognize the sympathetic impulse in man as a natural endowment; the highest good is the happiness of the race. But this is a difference of principle only, which does not affect the practice of human beings; both systems empha-

[1] In Anniceris we even get a slight tendency to altruism; he advises us to forego our pleasure and submit to pain for the sake of friends and country.

size the necessity of doing good to our fellows, the one because our individual happiness depends upon our regard for our neighbor, the other because man is by nature disposed to care for the good of his fellow-men.

Another important change is made in modern hedonism by J. S. Mill. According to him pleasure is the highest good and the standard of morality. But the experience of the race teaches that some pleasures, as, for example, the pleasures accompanying the exercise of our higher mental faculties, are preferred to others. The race prefers them, however, not because they are the most intense, but because they differ in *kind* or *quality* from those accompanying the lower functions. Men evidently prefer these pleasures because they cannot help themselves, they must prefer them, they prefer them *absolutely;* it is their nature to prefer them. The standard, therefore, is not pleasure as such, but a certain quality of pleasure, and man prefers this quality *absolutely*.[1] Not pleasure as such, but the higher pleasures, move us to action. Or, rather, since "it is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied," the highest good is really not pleasure so much as the exercise of the higher mental functions. In this form there is no radical difference between hedonism and energism.[2]

[1] This view reminds one of Martineau's theory of conscience. See chap. ii, § 5, p. 45.

[2] See Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. ii, end of § 6.

Not only do we get in Mill an approximation to energism, but an approximation to intuitionism. According to him both the egoistic and altruistic or sympathetic impulses are innate or original possessions of the human soul. Besides, in so far as we make a qualitative distinction between different pleasures, *absolutely* preferring some to others, we may be said to possess an innate knowledge of the better and the worse, or an innate conscience. In Sidgwick this intuitional phase is more pronounced. Man is endowed with innate principles: the principle of self-love, the principle of benevolence, and the principle of justice.

CHAPTER VII

THEORIES OF THE HIGHEST GOOD: ENERGISM[1]

1. *Socrates.*—Let us now turn our attention to a school of thinkers who deny that pleasure or happiness is the end of life and the standard of morality, and set up what they at least believe to be a different goal.

Socrates[2] opposed the hedonistic teachings of the Sophists, and declared virtue to be the highest good. But what is virtue? Virtue is knowledge.[3] We cannot be proficient in any line without knowledge of the subject. A man cannot be a successful general without a knowledge of military affairs, nor a statesman unless he has an insight into the nature and purpose of the State.

But what is knowledge? To know means to have correct concepts of things, to know their purposes, aims, or ends, to know what they are good for.

[1] See references under chap. ii.

[2] 469–399 B.C. See Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, translated in Bohn's Library; Plato's *Protagoras*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Symposium*, etc., in Jowett's translation; Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Bk. I, 6. Bibliography in *Weber*.

[3] Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, Bk. IV, chap. vi, 11; Bk. I, chap. i, 16; Bk. II, chap. ix, 5.

Everything has its purpose, is good for something, especially for man.[1] If that is so, the man who knows what things are good for him, will do these things, and he alone will be able to realize his desires, his welfare and happiness. Hence knowledge or wisdom (*σοφία*), without which a man cannot attain to happiness (*εὖ ζῆν, ἡδέως ζῆν*), is the highest good (*μέγιστον ἀγαθόν*). That is to say, virtue is the knowledge of good and evil, and the consequent doing of good, and the avoidance of evil. Hence no man is voluntarily bad nor involuntarily good. Vice is due to ignorance.

Now what is good for man? What is useful to him? The lawful (*νόμιμον*), says Socrates. Man must obey the laws of the State as well as the unwritten laws of the gods, *i.e.*, the universal laws of morality. To be good or moral is to be in harmony with the laws of one's country and human nature.

Virtue conduces to happiness. But should a conflict arise between virtue and happiness, virtue must never be sacrificed to happiness.[2]

2. *Plato.* — Plato,[3] the pupil and follower of Socrates, teaches that not pleasure, but insight, knowledge, the contemplation of beautiful ideas, a life of reason, are the highest good.[4] We should seek to

[1] *Memorabilia*, Bk. I, chap. iv, 7–17; Bk. IV, chap. iii, 3 ff.

[2] Bk. II, chap. vii, 10; Bk. IV, chap. iv, 4; Plato's *Apology*, 29, 30.

[3] 427–347 B.C. See the Dialogues of Plato, especially *Theætetus*, *Phædo*, *Philebus*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, translated by Jowett.

[4] *Gorgias*, 474 *c* ff.; *Philebus*, 11 *b*, 14 *b*, 19 *d*.

free ourselves from the body and the senses, for the body is a fetter, the prison-house of the soul, an evil. "Wherefore we ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can, and to fly away is to become like God."[1] Philosophy means the separation and release of the soul from the body,[2] the losing of oneself in the contemplation of ideas, which are the true essences of things, the return of the soul to its former heavenly home.

Beside this ascetic ideal of life, Plato also presents a somewhat modified ethical scheme, adapted to the conditions of the world in which we live.[3] The sense-world being a reflection of the ideal world, the contemplation of it will give us a glimpse into the truth and beauty of the other. Now in such a world what is the highest good? The highest good must be something perfect,[4] something that does not need anything outside of itself, something desirable in itself, something the possession of which makes other things unnecessary. Now neither pleasure nor wisdom as such is a good. A life of pleasure devoid of intelligence and wisdom no one would call desirable. Nor would any one choose a life of reason that is free from pleasure and pain. The end is a μικτὸς βίος, a mixed life of wisdom and pleasure. In such a life pleasure is not the highest factor, but the lowest. The pleasure must be controlled by wisdom.

[1] *Theætetus*, 176 *a*. [2] *Phædo*, 64–67, 69, 79–84, 114.
[3] See Schwegler, *History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 228, 232.
[4] τέλεον; *Philebus*, 20 ff.

Wisdom produces order, harmony, symmetry, law. If pleasure were the highest, then the most intense, unbridled pleasure would be the best, which is not the case. The best life is one in which the lower soul-forces, the impulses and the animal desires, are subordinated to reason, one in which reason commands and the other elements obey.

3. *The Cynics.* — After the death of Socrates, Antisthenes,[1] one of his most devoted followers, founded the Cynic School, named after the gymnasium of Kynosarges, where he delivered his lectures. The Cynics opposed the hedonism of the Cyrenaics,[2] and exaggerated certain phases of the Socratic doctrine. Pleasure, says Antisthenes, is not the highest good; indeed, it is no good at all, but an evil.[3] Then what is the good? The very opposite of pleasure, πόνος, privation, exertion, work, struggle with passion, is good. We should make ourselves independent of the things of the world (ἐγκράτεια). The man who sets his heart on pleasure, wealth, honor, or fame, is doomed to disappointment. Let him renounce the uncertain, treacherous gifts of fortune, let him be indifferent to pleasure and pain alike; let him learn to want, and misfortune cannot conquer him. Sweet are the pleasures that follow labor. Cease desiring, and you will be rich even in

[1] Diogenes Laertius, Bk. VI; Mullach's *Fragments*, vol. II, 261 ff.; Ritter and Preller's *Fragments*, pp. 216 ff.

[2] See chap. vi, § 3.

[3] "I would rather go mad than feel pleasure," as he once said: μανίην μᾶλλον ἢ ἡσθείην. — Diogenes Laertius, Bk. VI.

a beggar's garb. To desire nothing is the greatest wealth. Virtue is the highest and only good. It is not, however, necessary to be very learned to be virtuous. Virtue consists in action and conduces to happiness.[1]

4. *Aristotle.* — According to Aristotle,[2] all human activity has some end in view. This end in turn may be the means to another higher end, but there must be some ultimate or highest end or good, which is desired for its own sake and not as a means to something else. Now what is this highest good? For some it consists in wealth, for others in pleasure, for still others in honor, wisdom, or virtue. But wealth is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Pleasure, too, is a good, but not *the* good. The truth is we strive after honor, pleasure, virtue, wisdom, for the sake of something else, which is sought after for its own sake. That end is eudæmonia (*εὐδαιμονία*), or happiness. In what does happiness consist? The welfare of every being consists in the realization of its specific nature. The end or happiness of man will therefore consist in the realization of that which makes man a man, that is, in the exercise of rational activity. The highest good of human existence is the exercise of reason.

Virtue, then, means the proper functioning of the

[1] Diogenes of Sinope, the pupil of Antisthenes, whom Plato called a "Socrates gone mad," is an extreme representative of cynicism. "A man must not only learn to do without pleasure," he says, "he must learn to do with pain."

[2] 385–323 B.C. *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by Welldon.

soul. Now the soul is partly reflective or thinking or knowing, partly volitional or practical. Hence, there are dianoetical virtues (such as wisdom, prudence, insight) and ethical or practical virtues (such as liberality, self-control, courage, pride, magnanimity, etc.). Ethical virtue consists in the subordination of the lower soul-forces or impulses to correct reason. The impulses must be governed or controlled by reason or insight. Virtue is acquired, but based on preëxisting dispositions of the soul. Virtue is the rationalization of impulses. But the question arises, When is an impulse rationalized? When it keeps the mean between two extremes, answers Aristotle. "Virtue is a disposition involving deliberate purpose, or choice, consisting in a mean that is relative to ourselves, the mean being determined by reason, or as a prudent man would determine it."[1]

Virtuous activity, then, in a complete or full life is the highest good.[2] Pleasure is the necessary and immediate consequence of such activity, but it is not the end. We should choose virtuous activity even though it were not accompanied by pleasure. The pleasure depends upon the virtuous activity, and only such pleasure as follows virtuous activity is good or moral.[3] Certain external goods, however,

[1] *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. vi, Welldon's translation, p. 50.

[2] "For one swallow does not make spring," Aristotle adds.

[3] *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. ix.

are indispensable to eudæmonia, namely health, freedom, honor; certain capacities and talents; wealth, etc. Neither a slave nor a child can be happy.

5. *The Stoics.*—The Stoic school, founded by Zeno of Citium in the στόα ποικίλη, shortly after 310 B.C., is the successor of the Cynics.[1] The Stoics taught that the chief good is to live according to nature. For man this means to live according to *his* nature, *i.e.*, according to reason, "that universal right reason which pervades everything."[2] We live according to nature or reason, when we live according to virtue.

Now what does virtuous action demand? It demands that man conquer his passions, for passions are the irrational element in us. There are four fundamental passions (πάθη): pain, fear, desire, pleasure (λύπη, φόβος, ἐπιθυμία, ἡδονή). These passions arise as follows: We have impulses which are in themselves good, like the impulse of self-preservation. These impulses may become too violent and give rise to a false judgment on our part. Such a false judgment is a passion. Thus a false judgment of present and future goods arouses pleasure and desire; of present and future ills, pain and fear. All these passions and their different species we must combat, for they are irrational; they are dis-

[1] See Diogenes Laertius, Bk. VII; Stobæus, *Eclogues,* Bk. II; Cicero, *De finibus;* the works of Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius; Ritter and Preller, pp. 392 ff.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, p. 291.

eases of the soul. It is not enough to be moderate; *apathy* is the only proper state with reference to them. The wise man is without passion, *apathetic;* he is not affected by fear, desire, pain, or pleasure. Virtue, therefore, is identical with apathy. The passionless sage is the Stoic ideal.

Virtue is the highest and only good, vice the only evil; everything else is indifferent: death, sickness, poverty, etc., are not evils; life, health, honor, possessions, are not goods. Even the pleasure produced by virtue (*χαρά*) is not an end, but merely the natural consequence of virtuous action.[1] The wise man is the virtuous man, because he knows what to do and what to avoid.

The Stoic ethics exercised a great influence upon Roman thought and action. As the most illustrious representatives of the school in later times we may mention: Cicero,[2] Lucius Annæus Seneca,[3] Epictetus,[4] Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the Emperor.[5]

6. *The Neo-Platonists.* — According to the later Platonists or Neo-Platonists, the universe is an

[1] Strict adherents of the school do not even admit that pleasure is a consequence.

[2] † 43 B.C. *De finibus bonorum et malorum.* English translation in Bohn's Library.

[3] † 65 A.D. *Letters to Lucilius.* English translation of Seneca in Bohn's Library.

[4] Born about 60 A.D. His teachings were preserved by Flavius Arrianus in the *Encheiridion*, or Manual. English translation by Long.

[5] Died 180 A.D. *τῶν εἰς ἑαυτὸν βιβλία.* English translation by Long.

emanation from God, the absolute spirit, who transcends everything that can be conceived or said. All the way from intelligence to formless matter the emanations become more and more imperfect. Matter is the very lowest in the stage of being, devoid of form, the principle of all imperfection and evil in the world. Yet matter is necessary. Just as light must in the end become darkness at the farthest distance from its origin, so spirit must become matter. But everything that has come from God strives to return to Him again.

Man is the mirror of the universe, the microcosm, mind and matter, good and bad. The highest good is the pure intellectual existence of the soul, "in which the soul has no community with the body, and is wholly turned toward reason, and restored to the likeness of God."[1] The highest aim of man is to become one with God and the supra-sensuous world, to lose himself in the absolute. To quote from Weber's *History of Philosophy:*[2] "The artist seeks for the idea in its sensible manifestations; the lover seeks for it in the human soul; the philosopher, finally, seeks for it in the sphere in which it dwells without alloy, — in the intelligible world and in God. The man who has tasted the delights of meditation and contemplation foregoes both art and love. The traveller who has beheld and admired a

[1] Plotinus, the chief representative of the school, seemed to be ashamed of having a body.

[2] English translation, pp. 178–179.

royal palace forgets the beauty of the apartments when he perceives the sovereign. For the philosopher, beauty in art, nay, living beauty itself, is but a pale reflection of absolute beauty. He despises the body and its pleasures in order to concentrate all his thoughts upon the only thing that endures forever. The joys of the philosopher are unspeakable. These joys make him forget, not only the earth, but his own individuality; he is lost in the pure intuition of the absolute. His rapture is a union (ἕνωσις) of the human soul with the divine intellect, an ecstasy, a flight of the soul to its heavenly home. As long as he lives in the body, the philosopher enjoys this vision of God only for certain short moments, — Plotinus had four such transports, — but what is the exception in this life will be the rule and the normal state of the soul in the life to come. Death, it is true, is not a direct passage to a state of perfection. The soul which is purified in philosophy here below continues to be purified beyond the grave until it is divested of individuality itself, the last vestige of its earthly bondage." In short, the highest happiness consists in being united with the supra-sensible. We must, therefore, withdraw ourselves from the world of sense, free ourselves from the body, become ascetics.

We have in this philosophy an exaggerated edition of Platonism. If the highest good is mind or intellectuality or the supra-sensuous, then the sooner we get away from the body the better. If the body is

the prison, the fetter, the chain, the pollution of the soul, the sooner we free ourselves from it the better.[1]

7. *Hobbes.* — Let us now turn to modern times. According to Thomas Hobbes,[2] every living being strives to preserve itself. It seeks everything that furthers this end, avoids everything that defeats it. But the end is not always realized. The individual does not realize the end because other individuals having the same purpose in view come in conflict with him. The impulse of self-preservation thus produces a war of all against all, *bellum omnium contra omnes*, and so really defeats itself. Prudence therefore demands the formation of the State, in which the individual subordinates his own will to the general will, thus making life possible. In the State peace and security, the conditions of self-preservation, are realized. The highest end is therefore self-preservation, or life, of which the State is the means.[3]

8. *Spinoza.* — From this view the ethical system of Spinoza[4] does not much differ. He too holds

[1] With these ascetic tendencies in Plato and his successors, primitive Christianity had much in common. Christianity was for a long time an ascetic religion. It preached the crucifixion of the flesh. This world was regarded as a vale of tears, as a grave, and heaven as the soul's true home. For the Christian conception of life, see the excellent chap. ii, Bk. I, in Paulsen's *Ethics*.

[2] See chap. ii, § 6 (1).

[3] See *Leviathan*, especially chaps. vi, xiii, xiv.

[4] 1632–1677. *Ethics*, translated by White; also in Bohn's Library. *Selections from Ethics*, translated by Fullerton. For bibliography, see Weber's *History of Philosophy*. See also Fullerton, *On Spinozistic Immortality*.

that every being strives to preserve its own existence or essence.[1] "As reason makes no demands contrary to nature, it demands that every man should love himself, should seek that which is useful to him — I mean, that which is really useful to him, should desire everything which really brings man to greater perfection, and should, each for himself, endeavor as far as he can to preserve his own being. This is as necessarily true as that a whole is greater than a part. Again, as virtue is nothing else but action in accordance with the laws of one's own nature,[2] and as no one endeavors to preserve his own being, except in accordance with the laws of his own nature, it follows, first, that the foundation of virtue is the endeavor to preserve one's own being, and that happiness consists in man's power of preserving his own being; secondly, that virtue is to be desired for its own sake, and that there is nothing more excellent or more useful to us, for the sake of which we should desire it; thirdly and lastly, that suicides are weak-minded, and are overcome by external causes repugnant to their nature. Further, it follows that we can never arrive at doing without all external things for the preservation of our being or

[1] *Ethics*, Part III, prop. vi.

[2] *Ib.*, Part IV, prop. xx: "The more every man endeavors, and is able to seek what is useful to him — in other words, to preserve his own being — the more is he endowed with virtue; on the contrary, in proportion as a man neglects to seek what is useful to him, that is, to preserve his own being, he is wanting in power." See also Part IV, prop. xxiv.

living, so as to have no relations with things which are outside of ourselves. Again, if we consider our mind, we see that our intellect would be more imperfect, if mind were alone, and could understand nothing besides itself. There are, then, many things outside ourselves, which are useful to us, and are, therefore, to be desired. Of such none can be discerned more excellent than those which are in entire agreement with our nature. For if, for example, two individuals of entirely the same nature are united, they form a combination twice as powerful as either of them singly. Therefore, to man there is nothing more useful than man — nothing, I repeat, more excellent for preserving their being can be wished for by men, than that all should so in all points agree, that the minds and bodies of all should form, as it were, one single mind and one single body, and that all should, with one consent, as far as they are able, endeavor to preserve their being, and all with one consent seek what is useful to them all. Hence, men who are governed by reason — that is, who seek what is useful to them in accordance with reason — desire for themselves nothing which they do not also desire for the rest of mankind, and, consequently, are just, faithful, and honorable in their conduct." [1] Now, "in life it is before all things useful to perfect the understanding, or reason, as far as we can, and in this alone man's highest happiness or blessedness consists, indeed blessedness is nothing else but the contentment

[1] *Ethics*, Part IV, prop. xviii note.

of the spirit, which arises from the intuitive knowledge of God: now, to perfect the understanding is nothing else but to understand God, God's attributes, and the actions which follow from the necessity of His nature."[1] "The mind's highest good is the knowledge of God, and the mind's highest virtue is to know God."[2]

9. *Cumberland.* — Both Richard Cumberland and Lord Shaftesbury also place the highest good in welfare, not in the welfare of the individual, however, but in the *common good*, by which they mean not pleasure, but perfection.[3] Cumberland says: "The endeavor, to the utmost of our power, of promoting the common good of the whole system of rational agents, conduces, as far as in us lies, to the good of every part, in which our own happiness, as that of a part, is contained. But contrary action produces contrary effects, and consequently our own misery, as well as that of others."[4] "The greatest possible benevolence of every rational agent toward all the rest constitutes the happiest state of each and all, so far as depends on their own power, and is necessarily required for their happiness; accordingly com-

[1] *Ethics*, Part IV, Appendix iv.

[2] *Ib.*, Part IV, prop. xxviii. Translations taken from Bohn's Library Edition.

[3] Richard Cumberland, 1632–1719, *De legibus naturæ*, 1672; translated into English by Jean Maxwell, 1727. See E. Albee, "The Ethical System of Richard Cumberland," *Philosophical Review*, 1895. For Shaftesbury, see chap. ii, § 4 (1).

[4] See Albee, "The Ethical System of Richard Cumberland."

mon good will be the supreme law." Again, "The happiness of each individual . . . is derived from the best state of the whole system, as the nourishment of each member of an animal depends upon the nourishment of the whole mass of blood diffused through the whole." The common good being the end, "such actions as take the shortest way to this effect . . . are naturally called 'right,' because of their natural resemblance to a right line, which is the shortest that can be drawn between any two given points, . . . but the rule itself is called right, as pointing out the shortest way to the end."

10. *Shaftesbury.* — Shaftesbury[1] finds in man two kinds of impulses: "selfish or private affections," and "natural, kind, or social affections." The selfish affections are directed toward the individual welfare or preservation, "private good"; the social affections, toward common welfare, the preservation of the system of which the individual forms a part, "public good." Just as the health or perfection of a bodily organism consists in the harmonious coöperation of all its organs, so the health or perfection of the soul consists in the harmonious coöperation of the selfish and social affections. An individual is good or virtuous when all his inclinations and affections conduce to the welfare of his species or the system of which he is a part. Virtue is the proper balance or harmony between the two impulses.

[1] See chap. ii, § 4 (1).

But how can we tell whether our impulses are properly balanced? By means of the *moral sense*, as we have already seen,[1] the sense of right and wrong, the rational affections. The moral sense is original or innate, like the other affections. Just as the contemplation of works of art arouses feelings of disinterested approbation and disapprobation, so the contemplation of human acts and impulses, whether of others or ourselves, arouses feelings of approval and disapproval.

Since man is originally a social being, he derives his greatest happiness from that which makes for the existence of society and the common weal. The necessary concomitant of virtue is happiness, just as pleasure accompanies the right state of the organism.

11. *Darwin.*[2] — The modern evolutionists agree with this conception. I quote a passage from Darwin's *Descent of Man:* "In the case of the lower animals it seems much more appropriate to speak of their social instincts as having been developed for the general good rather than for the general happiness of the species. The term *general good* may be defined as the rearing of the greatest number of individuals in full vigor and health, with all their faculties perfect, under the conditions to which they are subjected. As the social instincts both of man and the lower animals have no doubt been developed by nearly the same steps, it would be found advis-

[1] Chap. ii, § 4 (1). [2] See chap. ii, § 7 (2).

able, if found practicable, to use the same definition in both cases, and to take as the standard of morality the general good or welfare of the community rather than the general happiness. . . . When a man risks his life to save that of a fellow-creature, it seems also more correct to say that he acts for the general good, rather than for the general happiness of mankind. No doubt the welfare and the happiness of the individual usually coincide; and a contented, happy tribe will flourish better than one that is discontented and unhappy. We have seen that even at an early period in the history of man, the expressed wishes of the community will have naturally influenced, to a large extent, the conduct of each member; and as all wish for happiness, 'the greatest happiness principle' will have become a most important secondary guide and object; the social instinct, however, together with sympathy (which leads to our regarding the approbation and disapprobation of others), having served as the primary impulse and guide. Thus the reproach is removed of laying the foundation of the noblest part of our nature in the base principle of selfishness; unless, indeed, the satisfaction which every animal feels, when it follows its proper instincts, and the dissatisfaction felt when prevented, be called selfish." [1]

12. *Stephen.* — Leslie Stephen [2] defines the moral law "as a statement of the conditions or of a part of

[1] *Descent of Man*, chap. iv, Part I, Concluding Remarks.
[2] *The Science of Ethics*, 1882.

the conditions essential to the vitality of the social tissue."[1] Our moral judgments must condemn instincts and modes of conduct which are pernicious to the social vitality, and must approve the opposite; but it does not necessarily follow that it must disapprove or approve them because they are perceived to be pernicious or beneficial.[2] It is essential to social vitality that actions result from inner feelings. Hence the moral law has to be expressed in the form, "Be this," not in the form "Do this."

The utilitarian theory, which makes happiness the criterion of morality, coincides approximately with the evolutionistic theory, which makes health of the society the criterion; for health and happiness approximately coincide. We may infer that the typical or ideal character, at any given stage of development, the organization, which, as we say, represents the true line of advance, corresponds to a maximum of vitality.[3] It seems, again, this typical form, as the healthiest, must represent not only the strongest type, — that is, the type most capable of resisting unfavorable influences, — but also the happiest type; for every deviation from it affords a strong presumption, not merely of liability to the destructive processes which are distinctly morbid, but also to a diminished efficiency under normal conditions.[4]

[1] *The Science of Ethics*, 1882, chap. iv, ii, p. 148.
[2] *Ib.*
[3] *Ib.*, p. 406.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 407. See chap. ix, pp. 359 ff.; also chap. x, pp. 404 ff.

13. *Jhering.* — Rudolph von Jhering[1] advances a similar view. All moral laws and customs have as their end the weal and prosperity of society. All moral norms are social imperatives. All these social imperatives owe their existence to social ends. The ends of society depend upon its conditions.[2] The purpose of morality is the establishment and prosperity of society.[3] Now, just as a house is not a mere mass of stones, society is not a mere aggregate of individuals, but a whole made up of individual members, and formed into a *unity* by a community of ends. The part must adapt itself to the whole if the whole is to stand. Hence the postulate of a social *norm* which prescribes to the individual such conduct as is necessary to the social order in so far as his own inclinations do not serve society, and the necessity of securing compliance with the norm by means of compulsion. But mere mechanical or legal compulsion is not enough. We have also psychological compulsion. The advantage of psychological compulsion lies in the fact that it stops before no relation in life; it presses in everywhere like the atmosphere, into the interior of the home as well as to the steps of the throne — in places where mechanical compulsion can have no effect.

We may say that whatever human conduct is necessary to the existence of society is a constituent of the moral order and falls within the realm of

[1] *Der Zweck im Recht*, 2 vols, 1874.
[2] *Ib.*, Vol. II, pp. 95 ff.
[3] *Ib.*, Vol. II, pp. 134 ff.

moral law. As now the individual is necessary to society, whatever is required that he may live, even eating and drinking, comes under the view of morals. Even acts which spring from egoistic motives are objectively moral when they further the ends of society. Even our pleasures, recreations, and enjoyments have high objective moral significance, for they are the indispensable sources of our strength, and this benefits not merely us, but society.

One thought runs through all creation — self-preservation. Man raises himself up to the moral plane when he gains the insight that his individual self-preservation is conditioned by his social self-preservation. The means which nature employs in order to realize the law of self-preservation is pleasure. The necessary condition of pleasure is well-being. Well-being is possession of full powers. The striving after well-being is called eudæmonism. Social eudæmonism is the principle of morals. Wherein the weal and happiness of society consists, the history of mankind alone can evolve. Eudæmonism and utilitarianism are the same thing, from different points of view, the former from that of end, the latter from that of means.[1]

14. *Wundt and Contemporaries.* —Wundt[2] reaches a similar result. He holds that the proper way to investigate the moral end is to begin with the empirical moral judgments. Find the moral end in

[1] *Der Zweck im Recht*, Vol. II, chap. ix, pp. 204 ff.
[2] *Ethics*, translated in 3 vols.

particular cases, and by means of them proceed to the general ethical principle. Such an investigation will show that the individual, be it oneself or another, cannot be the ultimate end of morality. Happiness may be an important motive to the will and even an indispensable means for realizing the moral ends, but it cannot be regarded as the moral end itself. The universal spiritual productions of humanity, such as the State, art, science, and universal culture, are the objects of morality attainable by us. But since the very essence of morality is a ceaseless striving, the moral steps attained must not be regarded as a lasting end. The ultimate end of moral striving becomes an ideal never to be attained in reality. Thus the ethical ideal is the ultimate end; the progressive moral perfection of humanity the immediate end, of human morality.[1]

To the same school belong H. Höffding,[2] F. Paulsen,[3] Th. Ziegler,[4] A. Dorner,[5] J. Seth,[6] and others.

15. *Kant.* — Even Kant,[7] who regards himself as an opponent of all teleology, may, in my opinion, be classed among the energists. According to him, the highest good is not pleasure, neither my own nor that of mankind, but virtue, duty for duty's sake.

[1] *Ethics*, Part III.
[2] *Ethik*, 1887; *Ethische Principienlehre*, 1897.
[3] *System of Ethics*, edited and translated by Frank Thilly.
[4] *Sittliches Sein und sittliches Werden.*
[5] *Das menschliche Handeln.*
[6] *A Study of Ethical Principles.*
[7] See chap. ii, § 7 (1).

The highest good in the world is a good will, and a good will is good not because of what it performs, but good in itself. That is, it acts from respect of the law, from a pure sense of duty.[1] Now rational creatures alone have the faculty of acting according to the *conception* of laws, *i.e.*, according to principles, *i.e.*, have a *will*.[2] The conception of an objective principle, in so far as it is obligatory for a will, is called a command (of reason), and the formula of the command is called an imperative.[3] There is an imperative which commands a certain conduct immediately. It concerns not the matter of the action, or its intended result, but its form and the principle of which it is itself the result.[4] This is the categorical imperative. In order that this should be valid, it must be a necessary truth. This law follows necessarily from the very nature of the rational will.[5] If there is anything of absolute worth, an end in itself, the reason must command it.[6]

Now rational nature exists *as an end in itself*. Every man necessarily conceives his own existence as an end in itself, and must therefore regard every other rational creature's existence in the same way. Hence the will must give itself this law, So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only. This principle is essentially identical with this other: Act upon a maxim which,

[1] Abbott's translation, pp. 12, 16, 55, 164 ff., 180, 241.
[2] p. 29. [3] p. 30. [4] p. 33. [5] p. 44. [6] pp. 46 ff.

at the same time, involves its own universal validity for every rational being.[1] For if I am only to act so that my acts can become universal, I cannot will to use any other rational creature as a means without willing that he use me as a means. The rational will therefore imposes universal laws, laws that hold for all, laws acceptable to all, which makes possible a *kingdom of ends*.[2] Every rational being must so act as if he were by his maxims in every case a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends.[3]

Translated into popular language, this ethical philosophy of Kant's seems to me to agree with the systems which we have just been considering. Conscience categorically commands certain forms of conduct, regardless of their effects. When we examine the forms of conduct enjoined by conscience, we find that a common principle is applicable to all; they are all *fit* for something, they all conduce to an end or highest good, — something of absolute worth, something *absolutely* desired by human nature, or as Kant states it, something that reason or the categorical imperative commands. Now what is this end? It seems to be the good of society. "So act that thou canst will the maxim of thy action to become universal law." That is, do not lie and steal, for thou canst not will that lying and stealing become universal. Why not? "For with such a law there would be no promises at all, since

[1] Abbott's translation, p. 56. [2] p. 52. [3] p. 57.

it would be in vain to allege my intention in regard to my future actions to those who would not believe this allegation, or if they over-hastily did so would pay me back in my own coin. Hence my maxim, as soon as it should be made a universal law, would necessarily destroy itself." The implication here seems to be that society would go to pieces if the principles underlying certain acts should become universal.

Kant also declares that every man necessarily conceives his own existence as an end in itself. This means that every man has egoistic impulses. And because he is egoistic he must have a due regard for others, he must treat them with respect, for otherwise he cannot expect them to treat him with respect. This is what he means when he says, So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only. This is a philosophical statement of the command, Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The kingdom of ends would be impossible unless every man cared for his own welfare and that of his fellows; therefore such principles of morality are implanted in his heart as to make a kingdom of ends possible.[1]

16. *General Survey.* — In conclusion, let us note the progress which has been made in the history of the theory discussed in this chapter. The Greek

[1] Compare with this Sidgwick's system, as given in chap. vi, § 13.

energists regarded as the highest good, the exercise of reason, or the development of knowledge, and tended to ignore the emotional and impulsive factors of the soul-life. Modern energists generally take a broader view of the highest good, defining it not merely as the exercise of the intellectual functions, but as the preservation and development of life as a whole. Happiness as a phase of soul-life receives its appropriate place as a part of the end or highest good, and the theory of energism more closely approximates hedonism. Pleasure is a means to the end of perfection, an accompaniment of virtuous action, a sign that the goal is being realized. The altruistic element is also gradually introduced into the modern conception of energism. The preservation and development of the race is looked upon as the ideal of life and the standard of morality. Man is no longer conceived as striving merely for his own individual perfection and happiness, but for the good of the whole. Sympathy takes its place by the side of self-love as a natural endowment of the soul.[1] In the evolutionistic school we also get a closer approximation to intuitionism. Man strives after the preservation and perfection of himself and his fellows; and conscience is largely an inherited instrument in the service of this ideal or goal. It demands what is good for man as a member of society; it is the expression of the *general* will in the individual heart.

[1] Compare chap. vi, § 14.

CHAPTER VIII

CRITIQUE OF HEDONISM[1]

1. *The Conception of the Highest Good.* — Our historical review has shown us that there are different answers to the question, What is the end of life and the standard of morality? One school holds that pleasure — all the way from sensuous pleasure to intellectual pleasure, and all the way from the pleasure of the individual to the pleasure or happiness of humanity — is the highest good. Another combats this notion, and sets up as the end, not pleasure, but virtue, knowledge, perfection, self-preservation, or the preservation of society. We pointed out the fact that the Greeks concerned themselves with the question of the highest good, while the modern thinkers formulate the problem in a somewhat different manner, asking, What is the ground of moral distinctions; what makes an

[1] For criticism of hedonism, see Plato, *Philebus* and *Republic*, Bk. IX; Aristotle, *Ethics;* Kant, Abbott's translation; Darwin, *Descent of Man*, chap. iv; Lecky, *European Morals*, chap. i; Sidgwick, *Methods*, Bk. I, chap. iv; Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, III, VII; Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. ii; Bk. III, chaps. i, iv; Bk. IV, chaps. iii, iv; Martineau, *Types*, Vol. II; Murray, *Handbook of Ethics*, Bk. II, Part. I, chap. i; Simmel, *Einleitung*, Vol. I, chap. iv; Hyslop, *Elements*, pp. 349–385; Paulsen, *Ethics*, pp. 250 ff.

act right or wrong; what is the criterion, or standard, or ideal of conduct, called moral?

Let us now examine the answers which have been given to the question as the ancient Greeks asked it, and try to reach some conclusion with respect to it.

And first, let us inquire, What do we mean by the *summum bonum* or the highest good?

We may mean by the *summum bonum*: (1) something which humanity prizes as the most valuable thing in the world, something of absolute worth, for the sake of which everything else that is desired is desired. We may say: (*a*) that humanity *consciously and deliberately* sets up this good as its goal or ideal; or (*b*) that men are urged to action by this good, that this good is the *motive* of all action without being clearly and distinctly conceived as an ideal.

Or we may mean, not that men consciously or unconsciously strive after a certain end, but (2) that a certain end or result is realized in human conduct. This end or result may be desired by some intelligence outside of man, or it may be a purely mechanical consequence of the laws of nature. Thus we may find that a certain organ in the body realizes a certain end, that it serves a certain purpose, without desiring that purpose, or, in fact, knowing anything about it. We may attempt to explain this by saying that the purpose was desired by an intelligence outside or inside of the organ, — which would lead us into metaphysics, — or, that it was simply the effect of certain natural conditions.

Or the proposition may mean, not that a certain end or ideal is desired by humanity, nor that it is realized by humanity, but (3) that humanity *ought* to desire it.

Let us turn to the hedonistic theory and examine it in the light of the preceding reflections.

2. *Pleasure as the Highest Good.* — According to the hedonistic theory, pleasure is the highest good or end. Let us take this to mean that all human beings strive after pleasure. By pleasure we may mean positive or active pleasure, or freedom from pain, repose of spirit, peace of mind; sensuous pleasure, or intellectual pleasure; the pleasure of self, or the pleasure of others; momentary pleasure, or the pleasure of a lifetime. Now if the theory maintains that all men strive after pleasures of sense, that these are the highest good, it cannot be upheld. Men do not desire sensuous pleasures in preference to all others. We may say that they desire both kinds of pleasure, and that if any are preferred, it is the so-called higher pleasures rather than the others. With the progress of civilization, the race comes to care more for intellectual and moral pleasures than for the so-called bodily enjoyments. This truth has been recognized by such hedonists as Democritus, Epicurus, Mill, Sidgwick, and others. Again, if the theory means by pleasure the pleasure of the moment, it can be easily refuted. Indeed, perhaps no hedonist, not even Aristippus, ever recommended that we sacrifice the future to the present. It does not require much

experience to discover that certain pleasures are followed by pain, and that a whole life may be wrecked by the pleasure of a moment. "Der Wahn ist kurz, die Reu' ist lang." Rational creatures are able to judge of the future by the past, and will, therefore, be willing to forego a present pleasure and even to accept a present pain for the sake of a more enduring future pleasure.

(1) Let us interpret the theory to mean that men universally strive after pleasure, using the term *pleasure* in the widest and most favorable sense. Now, if we are to understand by this that every human being consciously sets up as the ideal of his conduct, pleasure or happiness, or freedom from pain, and systematically compares all his acts with this standard, selecting such as tend to produce pleasure and rejecting the opposites, the theory cannot stand. It cannot be proved that all men have clear ideals of life, and that they govern their lives in consistent harmony with them. Much less can it be proved that this ideal is pleasure. We cannot imagine the average man as saying to himself, Does this act agree with my ideal of life; will this mode of conduct be in harmony with my ideal of pleasure?

(2) But perhaps his acts are determined by pleasure after all, though he may not know it until he begins to reflect upon his states of consciousness. That is to say, the hedonistic theory may teach, All human acts are prompted by pleasure; the desire to get pleasure and to avoid pain is the principle

governing all conduct; pleasure is the only motive of action. Stated in this form the problem is a psychological problem, and must be solved by the science of psychology. We shall therefore have to investigate the psychology of action before we can give a satisfactory answer to the question under discussion.

3. *The Antecedents of Action.* — The first question which we shall ask ourselves here is this, What are the psychical antecedents of action, *i.e.*, the states of consciousness leading to an act or movement? What takes place in consciousness before a man acts or moves, in consequence of which he is said to act?[1]

(1) Sometimes movements occur without being preceded by any conscious states. The movements governing circulation and metabolism are largely *reflex* or mechanical; they are not under the control of consciousness, and not even accompanied by consciousness. Other reflex movements, like the contraction of the pupil regulating the amount of light received by the retina, likewise belong to this category.[2]

(2) In other cases reflex movements are followed or accompanied by conscious states. A strong atmospheric concussion may cause a violent shock in my entire nervous system, producing widespread movements, and arising in consciousness as a loud

[1] See the standard works on psychology.

[2] See Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, p. 416.

sound. Here it is not the sensation of sound that produces the movements; nay, what produces the former at the same time produces the latter.

(3) Sometimes movements follow conscious states immediately. Certain psychical states are accompanied or followed by movements *in* the body over which we have no control, and movements *of* the body, which we may learn to control. Let us look at some of these.

(*a*) The perception or thought of certain things may be accompanied or followed by intra-organic changes of all kinds (in the vasomotor, circulatory, respiratory systems, in the digestive apparatus, etc.), as well as by more pronounced physical reactions, such as laughing, weeping, screaming, etc., movements of attack and defence, gestures, exclamations, facial movements, etc. Sometimes, especially in children, the mere sight of a movement leads to imitative movements. In all these cases a fixed path seems to have been formed between certain brain parts and certain muscles, which are transmitted from generation to generation. We might call such movements *instinctive*.

(*b*) Often the mere perception or thought of a movement or object is followed by a movement which has been learned, without the intervention of any other psychical element. A person may, upon seeing a piano, begin to play in an almost mechanical way, or grasp at an object before him without really intending to do so. Or his thought

may be followed by incipient movements of the vocal organs, without his having the slightest knowledge of what is taking place.[1] A strong association seems to have been formed, by practice, between certain ideas and certain movements, so that when the former arise in consciousness, the latter immediately follow. Whenever a movement follows immediately upon an idea, the action is called *ideo-motor*.[2]

(*c*) Again, we may have the idea of a movement plus a feeling of pressure toward it. Here the whole soul seems to thrust itself in the direction of a certain movement. This process is attended with pleasurable feelings, which easily change into pain, when the pressure becomes too great, or when the impulse to perform the movement is balked. The physiological condition of the pressure feeling is most likely the energy stored up in the brain cells (which produces the movement) together with the excitations caused in the brain by muscular movements accompanying attention. The sight of a person who has insulted me may arouse in me a strong desire to strike him. I feel that I have to hold myself back, as it were,

[1] Steinthal calls attention to the contagious effect of the movements of the Flagellants, Tarantella dancers, etc., in this connection. Motions become contagious. When thousands cry *vive l'Empereur*, the Republican and Bourbon cannot resist. We can recall no movements without repeating the respective innervations. This explains actions performed by men who fear them, — hurling oneself from a tower, etc. Steinthal's *Ethik*, pp. 330 ff.

[2] See Carpenter, *Mental Physiology*, and others.

and the more I restrain myself the more I feel *impelled* to strike the blow. Here almost any movement will afford relief. We might call these acts *impulsive* acts.

(*d*) At other times a feeling of pleasure or a feeling of pain, or an anticipation of pleasure or pain, seems to push itself in between the idea and the act. This means simply that the idea is suffused with pleasure or pain, and that no movement will take place until these feelings are present. I make a movement; it gives me pleasure and I continue it, or it produces pain, and I stop it or make another. Or I think of a movement to be made, expect it to be pleasurable, and therefore make it.

(*e*) Most frequently many of these states together, *i.e.*, ideas, feelings of pressure, feelings of pleasure, feelings of aversion, feelings of pain, precede the discharge of a movement.

(4) In all cases mentioned above, the act takes place without the intervention of a so-called decision of the will. Let us now examine states in which this element enters.

The question here is, — What are the elements involved in willing as such, and what are the antecedents leading to an act of will, *i.e.*, what makes men *will* what they will? What takes place in consciousness when I *will* something, and what has taken place there before I willed it?

Let us take a typical case of willing, one which everybody would accept as such. I am considering

a certain end or result, be it a specific act, or a whole series of acts, or a train of thought. I have in consciousness the idea of an end or purpose or project or something that has not yet been done, but may be done. The end may be a vague one; I may have nothing but a hazy outline of the result to be achieved, or it may be clearly defined; I may have worked it out carefully, even to the details. I may be said to will this end or result when I assume a certain attitude toward it, when I *decide* that it shall be done, when I utter the *fiat;* or decide that it shall not be done, or utter the *veto.* In the one case I say yes, in the other no. A peculiar state of consciousness surrounds the idea of the result, a state of consciousness to which I give expression in language by saying, I *will; my mind is made up.* We call this state of consciousness or process in which the ego decides for or against the realization of an idea, an act of will.[1] Ziehen calls this state which accompanies the idea of an act in willing, "a positive emotional tone."[2] Perhaps we had better speak of it, however, as decision, as an attitude of the ego toward its project.[3] Höffding defines it as follows: "*Volition proper* is characterized psychologically by

[1] By will I do not mean a substantial entity, a metaphysical essence or force that produces the act (Schopenhauer), but simply the process itself which introspection reveals to us.

[2] See *Introduction to Physiological Psychology,* chap. xiv, pp. 265 ff.

[3] James speaks of it as the voluntary fiat, the volitional mandate, the mental consent.

the ideas of the end of the action and the means to its realization, and by a vivid feeling of the worth of that end."[1]

The drama of willing is closed when this peculiar process enters. It makes no difference whether the thing willed is ever realized or not. I may *will* to pursue a certain line of conduct, and afterwards change my mind about it. I may will to perform an act and never have an opportunity of doing it, or I may will it and find that I have not the power to carry it out. I have willed it when I have decided that I am going to do it, when it has received my sanction. If the act willed is a possible one, it will follow the act of will, the decision, as soon as the ideas of the movements to be made (the kinæsthetic ideas, as they are called by the psychologists) or the ideas initiating these movements (the remote ideas, as James calls them) arise in consciousness. We are utterly in the dark as to *how* the process takes place; we simply know, for example, that when we will to move the arm, it moves, and when we will to move the ear, it does not move.[2] The essential element in an act of will is this *fiat* or *veto*, this volitional man-

[1] *Psychology*, pp. 308–356. See Steinthal's *Ethik:* "Will is the conscious idea whose realization is approved of because its result, the caused alteration in the external world, is also presented and desired."

[2] All that we can do is to show how such kinæsthetic ideas are produced, and that when they are present in consciousness they may be accompanied by movements. See the psychologies of Lotze, Bain, Preyer, Baumann, James, which show how we learn to make movements.

date, the *decision* or "cutting short of the process of deliberation," this determination, selective volition, or choice.[1] Unless this element is present, we cannot be said to *will* in the common sense of that term. Movements may be made, however, without the presence of this factor. Not all the acts performed by us are *willed* in the sense in which we have just spoken of willing; not every *conscious* act, in other words, is a *willed* act. Instincts, impulses, desires, ideo-motor action, etc., are not acts of the will; they are not necessarily willed, though, of course, they may be. In order to be willed in the real sense of the term, they need the consent or assent we have spoken of. We frequently perform acts impulsively and excuse ourselves by saying that we did not *intend* them, that we could not help ourselves.[2]

4. *The Antecedents of Volition.* — We have found thus far that men are prompted to action by their

[1] See Ladd's *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory*, pp. 613 ff.

[2] It has become customary in modern psychology to extend the term *will* so as to make it synonymous with *psychic energy*. It is held that attention is involved in every state of consciousness, that no state can come to consciousness or be kept in consciousness without an act of attention. Just as a certain amount of physical energy must be present in the brain before an excitation can be produced there, so a certain amount of psychical energy must be present in consciousness before a state of consciousness can arise. This energy, or force, is called by Schopenhauer *will*, by Wundt and his followers *will*, *attention*, *apperception*, or *conation*. According to this view, every mental act is an act of will, and every physical movement that is preceded by consciousness is the same. We have preferred to use the term *will* in a narrower sense.

ideas, feelings, instincts, impulses, will, and combinations of these factors. We cannot say that feelings of pleasure are the only motives to action. But perhaps feelings of pleasure are the only motives to *willed* action, in the sense in which we have been using this term. Let us therefore investigate the antecedents of willing or volition a little more closely.

Let us ask, What causes me to decide for or against a project or end, or, rather, what happens in my consciousness prior to the decision or fiat?

Sometimes the bare idea of an end is sufficient to call forth the decision of the will. When the clock strikes eight I think of meeting my class, and without a moment's hesitation I utter the mental yes. Sometimes the decision is prompted by an instinct, an impulse, a wish, or a desire, by a feeling of pleasure or pain, or by the expectation of a pleasure or pain. I may will a course of conduct because I love or desire it, or because it promises me pleasure or freedom from pain, or because all these elements unite to gain my consent. Sometimes I feel impelled to act in a certain way which promises me pleasure, but feel a moral obligation to say no. It may require a severe effort on my part to say no, to decide against an act which is so charming; I seemingly have to force myself to consent to a course, which I finally do with a heavy heart.[1] Sometimes

[1] This feeling of effort is frequently spoken of as the will, or soul, in action; here we are supposed to feel the soul working,

the consent is not obtained until a great many reasons for and against a line of conduct have been considered, and until the agent understands the relation of the act to his desires or impulses or hopes or moral aims.[1] I may say yes to a line of conduct when I discover by reasoning or otherwise that it agrees with an ideal of mine, an ideal which I have already chosen by an act of will.

5. *Conclusions.* — Our main conclusions here are: —

(1) Not all human conscious action is *willed* action.

(2) Man is prompted to action by his instincts, impulses, desires, feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and volitions, *i.e.*, consciousness in every shape and form tends to be followed by action.

(3) Man is determined to *will* by his instincts, impulses, desires, feelings, thoughts, perceptions, *i.e.*, any state of consciousness may cause the ego to render a decision ; and hence,

(4) It cannot be true that pleasure alone determines action or *volition.*

6. *The Hedonistic Psychology of Action.* — Let us now look at the hedonistic psychology itself, and

"the dull, dead heave of the will" (see James, *Psychology*, chapter on "The Will"). But this feeling, whatever it may be, is not the fiat, or veto, itself, though it may be necessary to bring about the fiat, or veto. The view which identifies will with mental activity, and regards all psychic energy as will, will look upon the effort-feeling as a most typical case of willing, or soul-action.

[1] See James, *Psychology*, chapter on "The Will," the reasonable type of willing.

subject it to criticism. It asserts that all men are prompted to action either by pleasure or pain. This may mean that all action, both voluntary and non-voluntary (in our sense), is caused by pleasure and pain; or, that only willed action is determined in that way, *i.e.*, that pleasure and pain are the sole motives of willing.

In either case the sole motive may be: —

(1) Some variety of pleasure or pain, present or apprehended; that is, pleasure or pain, or the idea of pleasure or pain;

(2) Always a feeling of present pleasure or pain;

(3) A feeling of pain alone; or,

(4) Unconscious pleasure or pain, or an unconscious idea of pleasure or pain.

7. *Present or Apprehended Pleasure-Pain as the Motive.* — Interpreting the theory in the first sense, it means that actions are performed or not performed because they give us or promise us pleasure or pain. To quote Bain,[1] a typical hedonistic psychologist: "A few repetitions of the fortuitous concurrence of pleasure and a certain movement will lead to the forging of an acquired connection under the Law of Retentiveness and Contiguity, so that, at an after time, the pleasure or its idea shall evoke the proper movement." [2] "The remembrance, notion, or anticipation of a feeling can operate in essentially the same way as the real presence. . . . Without some antecedent of pleasurable or painful feeling,

[1] *Emotions and Will*, 3d edition, pp. 303–504. [2] *Ib.*, chap. i, § 8.

— actual or ideal, primary or derivative, — the will cannot be stimulated. . . . There is at bottom of every genuine voluntary impulse some one variety of the many forms wherein pain or pleasure takes possession of the conscious mind."[1] "Every object that pleases, engages, charms, or fascinates the mind, whether present, prospective or imagined, whether primitive or generated by association, — is a power to urge us to act, an end of pursuit; everything that gives pain, suffering, or by whatever name we choose to designate the bad side of our experience, is a motive agent in like manner."[2] The same remarks are made to apply to higher acts of willing, according to the same authority. "In this whole subject of deliberation, therefore, there is no exception furnished against the general theory of the will, or the doctrine, maintained in the previous pages, that, in volition, the executive is uniformly put in motion by some variety of pleasure or pain, present or apprehended, cool or excited."[3] "It is not necessary, however, it is not a condition of our enjoyment, that we should be every moment occupied with the thought of the subjective pleasure or pain connected with our pursuits; we are set in motion by these, and then we let them drop out of view for a time."[4]

[1] *Emotions and Will*, chap. iii, § 8, pp. 354 ff. [2] *Ib.*, p. 357.

[3] *Ib.*, chap. vii, p. 416. See also pp. 420 ff.: "A voluntary act (as well as some acts not voluntary) is accompanied with consciousness, or feeling; of which there may be several sorts. The original motive is some pleasure or pain, experienced or conceived."

[4] *Ib.*, p. 347. See also Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, pp. 425, 719 ff., 726.

That is, men think and act in order to procure pleasure and to avoid pain. Thus, for example, I am studying philosophy because of the pleasure I am deriving from it now, or because I expect pleasure hereafter. And I assist my fellow-men in their struggle for existence for the sake of the happiness my conduct procures for me. Pleasure, or the idea of it, in every case stimulates me to act as I do.

(1) The psychology of action does not seem to me to bear out this view. Pleasure, or the idea of pleasure, is, of course, an antecedent to volition and action, but it is not the only one by any means. I do not necessarily eat for the pleasure it gives me, nor do I get angry for the enjoyment of the thing. I do not necessarily obey the moral law because I get, or expect to get, pleasure, or desire to avoid pain. As was noticed before, psychology presents us with countless instances in which acts follow immediately upon the appearance in consciousness of certain ideas. As Professor James says: "So widespread and searching is this influence of pleasures and pains upon our movements that a premature philosophy has decided that these are our only spurs to action, and that wherever they seem to be absent, it is only because they are so far on among the 'remoter' images that prompt the action that they are overlooked. This is a great mistake, however. Important as is the influence of pleasures and pains upon our movements, they are far from being our only stimuli. With the manifestations of instinct

and emotional expression, for example, they have absolutely nothing to do. Who smiles for the pleasure of the smiling, or frowns for the pleasure of the frown? Who blushes to escape the discomfort of not blushing? Or who in anger, grief, or fear is actuated to the movements which he makes by the pleasures which they yield? In all these cases the movements are discharged fatally by the *vis a tergo* which the stimulus exerts upon a nervous system framed to respond in just that way. The objects of our rage, love, or terror, the occasions of our tears and smiles, whether they be present to our senses, or whether they be merely represented in idea, have this peculiar sort of impulsive power. The *impulsive quality* of mental states is an attribute behind which we cannot go. Some states of mind have more of it than others, some have it in this direction, and some in that. Feelings of pleasure and pain have it, and perceptions and imaginations of fact have it, but neither have it exclusively or peculiarly. It is of the essence of all consciousness (or of the neural process which underlies it) to instigate movement of some sort. That with one creature and object it should be of one sort, with others of another sort, is a problem for evolutionary history to explain. However the actual impulsions may have arisen, they must now be described as they exist; and those persons obey a curiously narrow teleological superstition who think themselves bound to interpret them in every instance as effects of the secret solicitancy of

pleasure, and repugnancy of pain. If the thought of pleasure can impel to action, surely other thoughts may. Experience only can decide which thoughts do."[1] Or in the words of Darwin, who, though not a professed psychologist, has observed more carefully than many of them: "All the authors whose works I have consulted, with a few exceptions, write as if there must be a distinct motive for every action, and that this must be associated with some pleasure or displeasure. But man seems often to act impulsively, that is, from instinct or long habit, without any consciousness of pleasure, in the same manner as does probably a bee or ant, when it blindly follows its instincts. Under circumstances of extreme peril, as during a fire, when a man endeavors to save a fellow-creature without a moment's hesitation, he can hardly feel pleasure; and still less has he time to reflect on the dissatisfaction which he might subsequently experience if he did not make the attempt. Should he afterward reflect upon his own conduct, he would feel that there lies within him an impulsive power widely different from a search after pleasure or happiness; and this seems to be the deeply planted social instinct."[2]

[1] *Psychology*, chapter on "The Will," Vol. II, pp. 549 ff. Compare with this Guyau, *La morale contemporaine*, p. 425: "We think, we feel, and the act follows. There is no need, therefore, of invoking the aid of an exterior pleasure, no need of a middle term or bridge to pass from one to the other of these two things: thought — action."

[2] *The Descent of Man*, p. 120. See also Sidgwick, *Methods of*

The urgency with which an idea can compel the attention and dominate consciousness is what gives it its motor force. "Let it once so dominate," says Professor James, "let no other ideas succeed in displacing it, and whatever motor effects belong to it by nature will inevitably occur — its impulsion, in short, being given to boot, and will manifest itself as a matter of course. This is what we have seen in instinct, in emotion, in common ideo-motor action, in hypnotic suggestion, in morbid impulsion, and in *voluntas invita*, — the impelling idea is simply the one which possesses the attention. It is the same where pleasure and pain are the motor spurs — they drive other thoughts from consciousness at the same time that they instigate their own characteristic 'volitional' effects. . . . In short, one does not see any case in which the steadfast occupancy of consciousness does not appear to be the prime condition of impulsive power. It is still more obviously the prime condition of inhibitive power. What checks

Ethics, "Pleasure and Desire," pp. 52 f.: "Thus a man of weak self-control, after fasting too long, may easily indulge his appetite for food to an extent which he knows to be unwholesome; and that not because the pleasure of eating appears to him, even in the moment of indulgence, at all worthy of consideration in comparison with the injury to his health, but merely because he feels an impulse to eat food, too powerful to be resisted. Thus, again, men have sacrificed all the enjoyments of life, and even life itself, to obtain posthumous fame; not from any illusory belief that they would be somehow capable of deriving pleasure from it, but from a direct desire of the future admiration of others, and a preference of it to their own pleasure." Hume, *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix I.

our impulses is the mere thinking of reason to the contrary — it is their bare presence to the mind which gives the veto, and makes acts, otherwise seductive, impossible to perform. If we could only *forget* our scruples, what exultant energy we should for a while display."

(2) Another point. If pleasure or pain, or the expectation of pleasure or pain, is what prompts all action, how shall we explain the first performance of so-called instinctive acts? Men as well as animals perform many acts instinctively, without knowing beforehand whether the results will be pleasurable or painful. The newly hatched chick sees the grain of corn, and straightway makes the movements necessary to pick it up, without any thought of pleasure. Similarly the sight of the infant arouses the love of the young mother, and impels her to care for it. And the lover of truth feels a craving to unravel the mysteries of the universe, regardless of whether his longings will bring him pleasure or pain. In cases like these there is present in consciousness a more or less distinct idea and a tendency toward it, a feeling of pressure or impulsion toward it. The explosion of the impulse will be followed by pleasure, though the agent may know nothing of this result until it has happened. The impulse or desire for the act here exists prior to the act itself and the pleasure accompanying or following it.

If the hedonistic theory is correct, then all these acts must be prompted by pleasure or the expecta-

tion of pleasure, or by pain or the fear of pain. It will not do to say that such acts are at first purely reflex, in the sense that they follow mechanically as the consequence of the stimulation of some nerve centre from within or without, and that the pleasure experienced after the first mechanical movement becomes the future motor cue. For if they have occurred originally without the intervention of a pleasurable motive, why should the pleasure be such an indispensable condition thereafter? Nor will it do to say that pleasure, though not now the motive, was the original motive, and that such acts are inheritances of the past. Such an explanation is a mere begging of the question ; it pushes the problem farther back into the field of the unknown, and then assumes the very thing to be proved. Besides, if acts can be performed at the present time without being prompted by pleasure, why could they not have been performed in a similar way before?

(3) Again, if pleasure, or the idea of pleasure, is the sole motive to action, how shall we explain the fact that some pleasures are preferred to others? Why do many men prefer the pleasures of the intellect to the pleasures of sense? Shall we say with Bentham that the so-called higher pleasures are more intense than the others? But many psychologists hold that the reverse is true.[1] And if the intensity of the pleasure is not what gives it its motive force, what is it? The peculiar quality of

[1] See Ladd, *Psychology*, p. 195.

the pleasure? (Mill.) In that case the theory abandons its original position that pleasure is the sole motive to action, and substitutes for it the view that a *certain kind* of pleasure causes us to act, a fact which must be explained.

Moreover, how did the race emerge from savagery, how did it come to prefer ideal pleasures? Who told our ancestors of the pleasures resulting from the pursuit of higher aims before they had tasted them? Were they not bound to think first, before they discovered that thinking was pleasurable?

(4) It seems that there can be conscious action which is not prompted by pleasure or the anticipation of it. Men think and plan and act, they struggle for fame and recognition in this world and in the next, they sacrifice themselves for ideals, much in the same manner in which children play and birds sing: because it is their nature to do what they do, because they desire or will to do it, not because it gives them pleasure. Giordano Bruno did not die at the stake for the pleasure of the thing, nor did Socrates drink the poisoned hemlock for the sake of happiness beyond the grave. Aristotle and Copernicus, Newton and Darwin, did not give up their lives to the study of nature in order to realize pleasure and avoid pain. They did what they did because they could not help themselves. "It is a calumny to say," so Carlyle declares, "that men are roused to heroic actions by ease, hope of pleasure, recompense — sugar-plums of any kind in this world

or the next. In the meanest mortal there lies something nobler. The poor swearing soldier hired to be shot has his 'honor of a soldier,' different from drill, regulations, and the shilling a day. It is not to taste sweet things, but to do noble and true things, and vindicate himself under God's heaven as a God-made man, that the poorest son of Adam dimly longs. Show him the way of doing that, the dullest day-drudge kindles into a hero. They wrong man greatly who say he is to be seduced by ease. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death, are the allurements that act on the heart of man. Kindle the inner genial life of him, you have a flame that burns up all lower considerations." [1]

(5) It is true that the realization of our desires and purposes is accompanied or followed by a temporary feeling of relief or satisfaction or pleasure. But this does not prove that the feeling, or the expectation of it, was the cause of the result. If I should make up my mind to jump out of the window, I should not be satisfied until I had accomplished the task. The realization of my desire would bring me relief, but the latter would not necessarily be the cause of the act. The tension in my brain or the energy in the cells would be discharged into my muscles, and a feeling of pleasure would ensue. But I could not say that it was the expectation of this result that made me jump.

[1] *Hero-Worship*, p. 237 (ed. 1858). Quoted by Lecky, *European Morals*, Vol. I, p. 57.

My pleasures depend upon my impulses and desires, my desires do not depend upon my pleasures. To assume that pleasure is the cause of an act because it follows the act, is a fallacy of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* kind. As Höffding says: "Because the end or the object of the impulse is something that excites, or seems to excite, pleasure, it need not necessarily be the feeling of pleasure itself. The impulse is essentially determined by an idea, is a striving after the content of this idea. In hunger, *e.g.*, the impulse has reference to the food, not to the feeling of pleasure in its consumption."[1] "The sympathetic impulses, *e.g.*, the impulse to mitigate the sorrows or to promote the welfare of others, are guided by the idea of the improved condition of others, depicted more or less in the imagination, as also by that of the pleasure they feel in their improved condition, — but it is not in the least necessary for the idea of the pleasure afforded to us by the sight of their improved condition to make itself felt."[2]

8. *Present Pleasure-Pain as the Motive.* — Sometimes the theory is interpreted in the second sense referred to above.[3] That is, all action is prompted by pleasure or pain, not by the idea or expectation of it. It is only because the idea of

[1] *Psychology*, English translation, p. 323. See Bain's answer to this argument, *Emotions and the Will*, "The Will," chap. viii, § 7.

[2] See also Steinthal, *Ethik*, Part III, pp. 312–382; II, pp. 227, 348.

[3] § 6.

a pleasure is accompanied by pleasure, and an idea of pain, by pain, that it has motive force. In the words of Jodl: "Only the newly arising feeling, caused by memory-images (presentation-feeling), not the idea of the feeling, that is, the memory of a feeling, or the conception of a feeling, influences the will."[1]

In answer to this view we may say: (1) Strictly speaking, we never have a state of consciousness which is purely a feeling. The feeling may be the predominant element, but it is not the only one in the process. In addition to feeling we have, according to modern psychology,[2] intellection and conation, or, to use more popular terms, thinking and willing. Consequently, why should we pick out one of the factors which go to make up a unified, conscious state, and regard it as the all-important motive to action? And, then, why pick out this particular one? The hedonistic psychologist makes the scheme of action and willing far too simple. He imagines that first we have an idea of some object or act, that this idea somehow or other arouses a feeling of pleasure or pain, in consequence of which a movement is made or inhibited. This explanation is as unsatisfactory as it is simple.

(2) Moreover, ignoring this objection, to say that

[1] *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, p. 726.

[2] See Ladd, *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory*, chap. iv; Höffding, *Psychology*, chap. iii; Sully, *The Human Mind*, Vol. I, chap. iv; Jodl, *Psychologie*, chap. iii, 2; Williams, *A Review of Evolutional Ethics*, pp. 360 ff.

pleasure is the only motive to action, assumes (*a*) that feelings alone can instigate action; (*b*) that only pleasurable and painful feelings can; and (*c*) that all feelings must be either pleasurable or painful. Each one of these statements is open to serious objection.

We have already shown in what precedes that feelings are not the sole motives to action or willing. And unless pleasure-pains are the only feelings in consciousness, we can show that other feelings have as much right to be regarded as motive forces as these. We have feelings of obligation, approval and disapproval, feelings of hope and fear, love and hate, anger, envy, trust, etc., all of which can influence action. Are these feelings merely pleasurable or painful tones of different ideas?[1] There is pain in disapproval, fear, hate, anger, and envy, no doubt, and pleasure in approval, hope, love, and trust. But is that all there is in these feelings? Does not each feeling possess its peculiar color-tone, so to speak? Is not the feeling of fear more than the idea of a future object plus a feeling of pain, and the feeling of anger more than the idea of something that opposes me, plus pain?

But, the opponent urges, would you perform certain acts if they procured you no pleasure? Yes, I answer, I should and I do. I perform many acts

[1] Spinoza, Höffding, Külpe, Jodl, Bain, would answer this question in the affirmative. In opposition see especially Wundt and Ladd.

which not only yield me no pleasure, but even give me pain. I catch a student cheating; it gives me no pleasure. I report him to the authorities; it gives me no pleasure. I testify against him; it gives me no pleasure. I see him disgraced; it gives me no pleasure. So, too, I submit to the pain of a surgical operation. Ah, yes, the hedonist replies, you derive pleasure from the thought of having done your duty, or from the hope of being restored to health. That may be; but I also get pain. Very true, but the pleasure exceeds the pain, comes the answer. I don't know; it is not an easy thing to compute pleasures and pains, and it is much harder to compare them with each other, and to say that the amount of pleasure which I derive from one act is greater than the amount of pain yielded by another. Besides, even though the pleasure did exceed the pain, that would not prove that the feeling of pleasure was the motive. As we have said before, the fact that pleasure follows does not prove that it precedes. But, it is said, *the hope* of it preëxists. Well, we have already found that the *idea* of pleasure is not the sole motive.

Another argument in favor of this aspect of the theory appears in this form: Pleasure must be the motive, because if an act gave me pain I should not perform it. Our answer is: (1) I do perform many acts which give me pain. Yes, but you do them for the sake of some future pleasure, I am told. That is begging the question; that is the very point

which has to be proved, and has not been proved. (2) Even if it were true that I should not perform an act that gave me pain, this would not of itself prove that the pleasure is the thing I am after. It would be like asserting that I go to the theatre in order to get warm, because I would not go if the house were cold.[1] We cannot think without the presence of arterial blood in the brain, but that will not allow us to conclude that arterial blood is the cause of thought, as Empedocles did. I cannot live without eating, but does that make eating the motive of my living? I will not eat of a certain dish unless it is seasoned properly, but is the seasoning the thing I am after? Do I eat my food for the pepper and salt it contains?

9. *Pain as the Motive.* — According to another phase of hedonism, neither pleasure nor the idea of pleasure, but a feeling of pain or discomfort, impels us to action.[2] We have certain needs or cravings, says Schopenhauer, and we feel pain unless they are satisfied. The will strives to free itself from pain, and therefore acts.[3]

Now, it is doubtless true that feelings of pain and discomfort often prevail in consciousness, and may be regarded as giving rise to action. My aching tooth may impel me to seek relief at the dentist's.

[1] See Simmel, *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, Vol. I, p. 316.

[2] See Rolph, *Biologische Probleme;* Sergi, *Physiological Psychology;* Schopenhauer; and others.

[3] See chap. x.

Or I may be bored to death in a certain town, and seek for a change of scene in consequence. But can we say that the feeling of pain is the *sole* motive to action? Do you eat and drink and plan and study and love and hate, simply in order to rid yourself of pain? I do not think so. Pain is a motive among others — and a very effective motive at times — but it is not the only one. We have impulses and desires, and when they are not satisfied they may grow more intense and be felt as pain or discomfort. But they may be realized before this feeling arises. This feeling of discomfort is in many cases nothing but the intensification of the impulse itself, the exaltation of the tendency or "urgency from within outward."[1] Perhaps it stands for the increased tension of the motor cells — the energy increases until it reaches the explosion point;[2] perhaps it represents the muscular, tendinous, and articular excitations caused in different parts of the body by the overflow from the brain;[3] perhaps it is due to both.[4] At any rate, to say that this feeling is the cause of the explosion or the movement, is like saying that the intensification of the impulse is the cause of the impulse, or that I desire an act because I desire it strongly.

We must therefore say to the advocates of this view: (1) If you claim that every act has for its

[1] Külpe, *Psychology*, English translation, p. 266.
[2] Bain, Wundt, Preyer. [3] James and Münsterberg.
[4] Ladd, *Psychology*, pp. 221 ff.

motive a feeling of pain, as in the examples first mentioned, you are in error; not *all* acts are thus produced. (2) If by the feeling of pain you mean the feeling of uneasiness which accompanies an impulse, you are wrong again, for (*a*) this feeling is not an essential antecedent to every act, and (*b*) it cannot be said to precede the impulse and set it in motion, *it is the impulse itself intensified.*[1]

10. *Unconscious Pleasure-Pain as the Motive.* — Psychology makes against the view that pleasure and pain, in any of the forms discussed above, are the sole motives to action. We are determined in our conduct not merely by pleasure and pain, or the hope or fear of pleasure and pain. Convinced of this fact, and yet unwilling to abandon his general proposition, the hedonist might say: True, the will is roused to action not merely by conscious pleasure or pain, or by a conscious idea of pleasure and pain, but by unconscious pleasure and pain, or by an unconscious presentation of pleasure and pain. That is to say, I am guided in many of my doings by unconscious pleasure and pain. My will is directed toward pleasure without knowing it. I strive after wealth, honor, fame, for the sake of the pleasure they will bring, without, however, always being aware of it. Wealth, honor, and fame, like the food which we eat, are sought after for the pleasure which they procure, though we may not be conscious of the fact.

[1] Külpe, *Psychology*, p. 267.

This, it seems to me, is rather a weak basis upon which to rest a theory. What happens in the realm of the unconscious I have no means of telling; indeed, I do not even know whether there is such a thing as an unconscious soul-life. When the hedonist has recourse to the unconscious he has recourse to the metaphysical; he shifts the problem from psychology to philosophy. As Sidgwick says: "The proposition would be difficult to disprove. . . . When once we go beyond the testimony of consciousness, there seems to be no clear method of determining which among the consequences of any action is the end at which it is aimed. For the same reason, however, the proposition is at any rate equally difficult to prove."[1]

But suppose we permit the concept of the unconscious to enter into our discussion. The hedonist claims that man blindly strives after pleasure, that he is unconsciously determined by pleasure or pain, or the idea of pleasure and pain. This assumption must be proved in some way. How can the hedonist prove it? How can he show us what takes place behind the curtain of the unconscious? By referring to the effects or results of the blind striving? That is, shall we say, Pleasure is the invariable effect of unconscious striving, hence pleasure is the unconscious motive? But even if the premise were true, would that make the conclusion true? Besides, is the premise true? Can we prove that pleasure

[1] *Methods of Ethics*, p. 53.

is the invariable effect or consequence of all blind striving?

I believe not. In the first place many results follow our impulses: movements, sensations, feelings of pleasure and pain, feelings of satisfaction due to the realization of the impulse, ideas, other impulses, etc. The realization of every impulse is accompanied and followed by elements of thinking, feeling, and willing. Now why should I pick out one of these and say that *it* is the unconscious choice of the mind? Besides, waiving this point, does the pleasure always come? Say that I am striving after wealth. My ostensible aim is the money; but, says hedonism, the real aim is pleasure. Pleasure, which is the secret power behind the throne, invariably follows the realization of desire. Is this true? I work and struggle and accumulate money, but am I ever satisfied?

Hedonism in this form consists of nothing but a lot of unproved suppositions: —

(1) That there are unconscious states of mind;

(2) That there can be unconscious pleasures and pains, or unconscious ideas of pleasure-pains;

(3) That pleasure-pains are the *only* unconscious motives that can lead to action;

(4) That pleasure and pain are the *universal* accompaniments of action.

11. *The Psychological Fallacies of Hedonism.* — I believe that we may now say without fear of contradiction that psychology makes against the

view that pleasure is the sole motive to action. We are not prompted to action solely by feelings of pleasure and pain, or ideas of pleasure and pain. It is a psychological fallacy to claim that we are. Generally speaking, this fallacy is based upon the following misconceptions : —

(1) Hedonistic psychologists hold that all feelings must be either pleasurable or painful, and that pleasure-pain constitutes the only class of feeling. This hypothesis, however, has not been proved to the satisfaction of a large number of psychologists.

(2) Hedonistic psychologists confuse impulses and desires with pleasurable and painful feelings. There is frequently present in consciousness, as we have pointed out, a more or less distinct idea of movement, together with a tendency toward it, a feeling of impulsion toward it, "a pressure from within, outward." This impulsion is felt as pleasurable until it reaches a certain point, when it may become painful. According as we unduly emphasize either the pleasurable or painful aspects of such states of consciousness as these, we shall assert either that pleasure or that pain is the invariable antecedent of action. But we must guard against wholly identifying the feeling of impulsion with pleasure or pain ; the impulse contains more than these elements, as we have pointed out above. Whether the physiological cause of the feeling-impulse is a nervous current running from the brain, or whether it is the excita-

tion produced in the brain by the resulting movements in the muscles, joints, and skin, or whether it is both, does not concern us here. One thing seems certain: the impulse on its mental side is more than pleasure and pain.

(3) Hedonistic psychologists also identify the affirmation or *fiat* of the will with pleasure, and the negation or *veto* with pain. They find that when the mind decides a case, there is a "tone of feeling" present, which, since pleasure-pains are the only feelings possible, must be a form of pleasure or pain. But though pleasures and pains are frequently fused with the state of consciousness which characterizes an act of will (in our sense), they are not the only elements contained in it, nor are they the all-important ones.

(4) Hedonistic psychologists also notice that the cognitive elements preceding an act are always changing, while the feeling-element remains the same. Hence they come to regard the feelings as the invariable antecedents of acts, and set them up as the motives of action. They make two mistakes here: They regard all feelings as tones or shades of pleasure-pain; and they conclude that because a certain aspect of consciousness precedes action, it must be the motive or cause of action.

(5) Hedonistic psychologists also believe that all acts are accompanied or followed by pleasure-pains, and therefore conclude that these must be the motives. But, as we have shown, it does not necessarily follow

that because pleasure-pains are the effects or results of acts they are therefore also the causes.

12. *The Pleasure of the Race as the Motive.*— But perhaps our opponents will say, We do not mean that the pleasure of self is the end or motive, but the pleasure of the race, the greatest happiness of the greatest number.[1]

We may urge the same objections against this view as against the other. It cannot be proved that all human beings strive after the pleasure of the race, that the idea of racial pleasure is the motive of human action. And to say that they unconsciously strive after the happiness of the race is as objectionable, in a certain sense, as to say that they unconsciously strive after their own pleasure.

13. *Pleasure as the End realized by All Action.*— Our conclusion, then, is this: If by the assertion, Pleasure, or happiness, is the end of life or the highest good, we mean that feelings of pleasure-pain, in some form or other, are the motives of human action, the theory cannot stand. Let us now interpret hedonism in a different sense.[2] Let us take it to mean that pleasure is the end or purpose of all action in the sense that all living beings realize pleasure, and that the realization of pleasure is the object of their existence.

But the first question which forces itself upon us here is this, Is pleasure really the result of all action? It will have to be proved not only that

[1] Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pp. 22–23. [2] See chap. viii, § 1 (2).

pleasure is *a* result of action, but *the* result, *i.e.* that all animals get more pleasure out of life than pain. We have already seen that Aristotle regards pleasure as the consequence or concomitant of normal or natural activity, while pain is linked with abnormal or injurious action. Spencer declares that "pains are the correlatives of actions injurious to the organism, while pleasures are the correlatives of acts conducive to its welfare." By conducive and injurious he means "tending to continuance or increase of life," and the reverse.[1] Bain teaches that "states of pleasure are connected with an increase, and states of pain with an abatement, of some or all, of the vital functions."[2] Although there are differences in expression, all these statements evidently mean the same, namely, that "pleasure is significant of activities which are beneficial, and pain is significant of what is harmful, either to the total organism of the individual or of the species, or to the particular organ primarily involved."[3]

Although this theory is not free from objections,[4] let us accept it for the sake of argument. Let us assume that pleasure accompanies beneficial activity, and that pain is the concomitant of all action that is harmful and dangerous. Functions, then, which are

[1] *Psychology*, § 124; *Data of Ethics*, § 33.

[2] *The Senses and the Intellect*, 4th edition, chap. iv, § 18, p. 303.

[3] Ladd, *Psychology*, p. 191. See also Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 177 ff.; Külpe, *Psychology*, English translation, pp. 267 ff.; Marshall, *Pleasure, Pain, and Æsthetics*, especially pp. 169 ff.

[4] See Ladd, Külpe, Sidgwick, Marshall.

useful are followed by pleasure, while those which are injurious have pain as their consequence. But would this prove that pleasure is the end of all animal existence, either in the sense in which we speak of vision being the end or purpose of the eye, or in the sense that God or some intelligent principle in nature has set up as the goal the pleasure of living beings?

When we speak of ends we may merely mean that a certain result is obtained, that life, for example, is tending in a certain direction. Thus, we say that an organ realizes a purpose. The eye is a purposive or teleological mechanism; it has a function to perform which is useful to the animal, it serves a purpose, realizes an end.

Now, is pleasure the end of life in this sense? Pleasure or happiness is a result of human existence, one of the results, a result among others. But how can we say that it is the *highest* end, that all other factors and functions are means to this? We can say that perception, imagination, reasoning, willing, etc., are means to pleasure, but can we not say with equal right that pleasure is a means to these? How can we prove that pleasure is the final goal of life? Why pick out one element of psychic life and say that the realization of this element is the goal toward which everything is making, the end-all and be-all of animal existence? Would it not be like claiming that seeing is the highest goal because normal beings possess an organ of sight? Would it not be more

reasonable to say that the different organs of the body are means to a higher end — the life of the entire body, of which the organs are parts; and that therefore every organ is a means to bodily life, and in so far as life consists of its organs, a partial end-in-itself? And would it not also be more reasonable to say that the realization of *all* mental states is the end, rather than that one element, which never exists alone in consciousness, is the end? It would be absurd to say that the whole body and its organs, the whole mind and all its functions, are the subordinate means to pleasure. It would be like saying that all the organs of the body are merely means of seeing, that vision is the end of life. Would it not be more plausible to reverse the statement and say, Vision is a means of life, and pleasure and pain are both means of preservation?

14. *Pleasure-Pain as a Means of Preservation.* — We can say that pain serves as a warning, pleasure as a bait. When the animal feels pain it makes movements of defence or flight. Pleasure and pain may be conceived as primitive forms of the knowledge of good and evil, as Paulsen expresses it. When the dangerous object is near at hand, the danger to life is greatest, and pain, therefore, most easily aroused. We find greater sensibility to pain in direct touch than in indirect touching like seeing and hearing.[1]

[1] See Nichols, article on "Pleasure and Pain," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. I, pp. 414 ff.

It seems, also, that as we pass from lower to higher forms of organic life (from lower animals to man, and from the lower organs to the higher), pleasure and pain gradually fall into the background. In the lowest forms the animal must come into direct contact with objects before it can feel and know how to act with regard to them. Tactual sensations plus feelings of pleasure and pain would assist the animal in preserving itself. In the course of time, however, organs are developed which enable the animal to become aware of helpful and dangerous things without coming into such close contact with them. By means of the organs of taste, smell, hearing, and sight, the animal practically touches objects at a greater and greater distance, and the farther away the object of sense is, the less pain and pleasure does it arouse.

I see no better way of interpreting such facts as these than by conceiving the feelings of pleasure and pain as means to an end — preservation.

We may reach a similar result by considering the function which memory performs. Even though it were true that every sensation had to be felt originally as pleasurable or painful in order to inform the animal of the nature of the object before it, and to release the appropriate movement with reference to it, we can understand how an animal possessing the power to retain its experiences could learn to act without being prompted by feelings of pleasure and pain. The touch or sight of the object might call

up the *thought* of the pleasure or pain experienced before, and the animal might act appropriately without feeling peripherally excited pleasure or pain. The animal could tell what was good or bad for it without directly experiencing pleasure or pain at all, because each sensation would be associated with ideas or copies of past sensations, and it could preserve itself because these ideas would call up certain movements which had been made before. Indeed, the sensation itself might come to be associated with the appropriate movements, without the intervention of any additional element. The sight of the hawk may be associated in the consciousness of the hen with certain tendencies to action, and here the association may have been formed during the history of the species ; it may be the result of race experience. The sight of a cliff over which the mule has once fallen may become associated in the mind of the animal with the thought of its past experience, and cause it to hesitate. Here the association is the result of individual experience. In both cases, however, a feeling of aversion is perhaps felt in the presence of the dangerous object, and this may be followed by a movement or the inhibition of a movement.

Now in the case of man abstract reasoning is added to the other processes. We pick out certain characteristics from the concrete object which we are considering, and connect them with certain general consequences.[1] We reason from the fact that a man

[1] See James, *Psychology:* "Reasoning," Vol. II, chap. xxii.

has certain symptoms that he has a certain disease, and prescribe a particular mode of treatment. The general discovers a weakness in the enemy's line of battle, and makes the movements which will lead to the desired overthrow of the opposing force.

It seems, then, that in the lowest stages of life the feelings of pleasure and pain serve as signs that the act is preservative. Afterward this element falls into the background, and other signs are employed. Percepts and ideas are associated either with the idea of pleasure or pain, which, in turn, is associated with the idea of some appropriate movement; or the percept or idea is associated directly with the act, as is the case with instincts, habitual acts, ideo-motor action, etc.

Hence we may say again what we found to be true before: Feelings of pleasure and pain often serve as signs of what furthers and hinders life; sometimes the ideas of such feelings, that is, the expectation of pleasure and pain, sometimes other ideas, indicate it. Hence it is fair to say that pleasures and pains are means of guiding the will; they assist the will in preserving and promoting individual and generic life. Whenever these results can be attained without the help of pleasure and pain, other means are employed. Pleasure is not the end aimed at by the will, but a means. It is far more reasonable to say that the will blindly strives for the preservation and the development of life, and that pleasure and pain

are among its guides, than to say that pleasure is the end and life the means. The part is a means to the whole of which it is the part; the whole is not a means to an individual part.

15. *The Physiological Basis of Pleasure-Pain.* — Now let us look at the matter physiologically. Let us consider what are the physiological conditions of pleasure and pain. When I exercise an organ moderately, a pleasant feeling arises; when I overexercise it, an unpleasant feeling is the result. A too intense light causes pain; a very loud sound does the same. It is often said that a very weak sensation is accompanied by an unpleasant feeling. This is true, however, only when we attempt to pay attention to it, in which case the pain is due to the effort we make. We may suppose that when an organ is exercised or stimulated, the cortical centre to which or from which the current runs has its nervous substance, its cells, destroyed. The energy in the cells is used up. But the energy is restored as quickly as possible by the blood, which carries nourishment. If the expended central energy is restored quickly enough to make up for the waste, a pleasant feeling arises. But when the cellular substance is not restored rapidly enough, we get unpleasant feelings. When the nervous system is acted upon, blood is carried to the parts in action in order to restore the expended force. The arteries are dilated. This explains the changes in pulse, respiration, etc., which accompany or follow pleas-

urable feelings. When, however, too severe a drain is made upon the parts in action, the blood does not carry enough nourishment, and the lost energy is not restored. Pain ensues. The breaking down of the cells reacts upon the movement of the arteries; the greater the demand made upon them, the less they can do; they become constricted. Hence, intense bodily pain may produce a swoon, "and the tortures of the rack have sometimes put the victim to sleep."[1]

Now to say that pleasure is the end, would mean, when translated into physiological language, that the entire body, with all its complicated organs, was nothing but a means for keeping the nervous energy in such a state that destruction should not exceed construction.[2] This is manifestly absurd. The sanest view to take is that the physiological condition corresponding to pleasure is a sign of the proper functioning of the system, that the health and integrity of the entire system is the end which is realized by the proper functioning of the nervous and every other system.

16. *Metaphysical Hedonism.* — Much harder would it be to prove that pleasure is the highest end

[1] Külpe, *Psychology*, p. 273. See Sutherland, *The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct*, Vol. II, chap. xxii.

[2] Or, if we assume the existence of special pain and pleasure nerves, the hedonistic physiology would mean that all the other nerves and all the other parts of the body were means to the excitation of the pleasure nerves, and that the excitation of these nerves was the end and aim of life.

aimed at by nature or by God. We should have the same problem as before, complicated with all the difficulties belonging to the teleological argument in metaphysics.[1] We should have to prove (1) that an end is really realized; (2) that pleasure is that end, which we have not been able to do so far; (3) that it is the end desired by God or by some intelligent principle in nature; and (4) that everything else is an appropriate means of realizing it. It would have to be shown that God made the world and everything in it in order to procure pleasure or happiness for his creatures. Can that be done? Countless numbers of living beings perish in the struggle for existence. Many are called but few are chosen. Only those survive who can meet the requirements of their surroundings, whose natures are adapted to the conditions of the world.

To assume that the end aimed at by God is pleasure, is to assume that everything in this world, the complicated bodies of the animals and everything in existence, was made in order that living beings might get pleasure. One feels like asking in this connection, why so much effort was wasted to produce this result — *tant de bruit pour une omelette* — when it might have been attained with less trouble. Perhaps the jellyfish has less to grumble at than man.

[1] For an excellent critique of teleology, see Paulsen's *Introduction to Philosophy*, English translation, pp. 158 ff.

17. *Pleasure as the Moral End.* — But, it might be said, although pleasure or happiness is not the end at which men aim, consciously or unconsciously, they *ought* to aim at it. Why, however, *ought* they to aim at it? we ask. To say that one *ought* to do a thing can mean: (1) that, if one desires to realize a certain end, one ought to use certain means; or (2) that one is *absolutely* bound to do a certain thing. Now if we say that man ought to make pleasure the goal, taking the *ought* relatively as in the first case, then we are practically making pleasure a means to some other end. If the ought is taken in the second sense, and we say that man is bound unconditionally to seek his happiness, that he is obliged to seek it, — morally obliged, perhaps, — we are simply making a dogmatic assertion which cannot be proved, and which will not be accepted by every one without qualification. It cannot be proved that one ought to strive after some highest good; this is a matter of feeling. Now, do all human beings *feel that they ought to* seek pleasure regardless of everything else, and do they feel that they ought to seek everything else for the sake of pleasure?

CHAPTER IX

THE HIGHEST GOOD[1]

1. *The Question of Ends or Ideals.* — Our examination has shown us that pleasure cannot be regarded as the end of action, in whatever sense we take the word *end*. Then what is the end? If we mean by the question, What is the motive to action? we cannot answer in a single word. All ideas are more or less impulsive, indeed every conscious state tends to translate itself into movement; consciousness is motor. If we mean by the question, What is the final goal at which human beings are *consciously and deliberately* aiming? then our answer must be, Human beings have not a definite end *in view* toward which they are consciously and methodically moving. We do not plan our lives so carefully, we do not first set up an ideal and then try to realize it. Individuals and nations may be said to have certain ideals, but not in the sense that they are clearly conscious of them.

[1] See the authors mentioned in chap. vii, especially Stephen, *Science of Ethics*, chaps. iv, ix, x; Jhering, *Zweck im Recht*, Vol. II, 95 ff.; Wundt, *Ethics*, pp. 493 ff.; Höffding, *Ethik*, VI; Paulsen, *Ethics*, Introduction, also pp. 275 ff.; also Ziegler, *Sittliches Sein und sittliches Werden;* Williams, *Evolutional Ethics*, Part II, chaps. vii, viii, ix. See also my article, "The Moral Law," in the *International Journal of Ethics*, January, 1900.

We can say, however, that every animal desires to live in its own peculiar way. The lion desires to live the life of a lion, man the life of a man. The brute is, of course, not conscious of the *ultimate* consequences of its strivings. It desires food and cares for its young not because it has before its consciousness the idea of individual and race preservation. It is not necessary that it should know all these things; the important thing is that it should do them.

When we examine the acts desired by animals, we find that they are purposive, that they realize a purpose. The lion roams over the desert seeking for prey, and when he finds it he acts in a manner appropriate to his purpose. The lioness cares for her young much like a human mother. We may say that the actions of these animals tend toward their self-preservation as well as toward the preservation of the species. And we may, therefore, say in a certain sense that these animals desire their own and their species' good, not, however, that they have in consciousness an ideal toward which they are working, and for the realization of which they are using everything else as a means. Their desires are directed toward concrete acts, which we may embrace under different classes, not toward abstract ideals.

Now, human beings, like other animals, have their minds fixed upon specific acts without being necessarily conscious of the *ultimate* consequences of these acts. They desire these acts, not for the sake of any

ultimate good, but for the sake of the acts themselves and their immediate consequences. I may benefit others because I love to do so, without being aware that I am thereby bettering humanity, and without consciously striving after that end. I may study from a love of study, because I have certain intellectual impulses, without being conscious that the realization of my desires will assist in civilizing the world, and without intending to work for progress. Or I may be thoroughly conscious of what I am doing and for what I am doing it, I may be governed in all my conduct by a clearly conceived ideal.

Now, different persons may have different ideals (meaning by ideals the direction which their impulses are taking, whether they are conscious of it or not). And the same individual may have different ideals at different times, nay, even, different ideals at the same time. One ideal may give way to another, which in turn may be relieved by a third. Moreover, ideals are more clearly presented in some consciousnesses than in others, and govern the lives of some individuals more characteristically than those of others.

Collective bodies like individuals move in certain directions in obedience to their characteristic desires, and have their ideals. Different nations have different ideals, and the same nation may have different ideals at different times. A nation's ideal manifests itself in all its products — in its religion, philosophy, poetry, art, literature, science, politics, morality, etc.

The ideals of the Jews, Athenians, and Spartans were not the same. The ideal of the earlier Romans differed largely from that of the Empire, and the ideal of the modern times does not agree with the ideal of the Middle Ages.

2. *The Ideal of Humanity.* — All these facts show us how hard it must be to answer the question, What is the highest good or ideal which humanity is striving to reach? in anything but a very general way. We can say that human beings desire to live human lives, which is a general statement of the fact that they have specific impulses, desires, or tendencies. They not only desire to live, but to live in specific ways. They love to exercise their powers and to develop their capacities. In the words of Paulsen: "The goal at which the will of every living creature aims, is the normal exercise of the vital functions which constitute its nature. Every animal desires to live the life for which it is predisposed. Its natural disposition manifests itself in impulses, and determines its activity. The formula may also be applied to man. He desires to live a *human* life and all that is implied in it; that is, a mental, historical life, in which there is room for the exercise of all human mental powers and virtues. He desires to play and to learn, to work and to acquire, to possess and to enjoy, to form and to create; he desires to love and to admire, to obey and to rule, to fight and to win, to make poetry and to dream, to think and to investigate. And he desires to do all

these things in their natural order of development, as life provides them. He desires to experience the relations of the child to its parents, of the pupil to his teacher, of the apprentice to the master; and his will, for the time being, finds the greatest satisfaction in such a life. He desires to live as a brother among brothers, as a friend among friends, as a companion among companions, as a citizen among citizens, and also to prove himself an enemy against enemies. Finally, he desires to experience what the lover, husband, and father experience — he desires to rear and educate children who shall preserve and transmit the contents of his own life. And after he has lived such a life and has acquitted himself like an honest man, he has realized his desires; his life is complete; contentedly he awaits the end, and his last wish is to be gathered peacefully to his fathers." [1] That is, to speak in general terms, man has certain impulses and longings, which he seeks to live out. As Professor James puts it, he has a material me, a social me, and a spiritual me, and the corresponding feelings and impulses. He desires to preserve and develop his body, to clothe it, to adorn it, to house it, to acquire and enjoy property, friends, and other possessions, to get social recognition, to be loved and admired, to promote his spiritual interests, and to assist his fellows in realizing similar desires.

We may generalize and say: Man desires his preservation and development, physical and mental. He

[1] *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. ii, § 5.

desires to know, to feel, to will, and to act. Some philosophers have regarded intellect (reason) as the goal, others have emphasized the feelings (pleasure), and still others have designated action, as the end.[1] Some have advised us to eradicate all material strivings, and to care only for the health of the soul, by which they meant either our moral or religious nature, or both. Mediæval ascetics regarded the body and all impulses except the desire to be united with God, as obstacles in the path of man. Natural impulses were regarded as the work of the devil, and therefore as things that ought to be suppressed. We must, however, beware of one-sidedness here, and not emphasize one element at the expense of another. We may say that human life and the development of human life is the end. But by life we do not mean mere eating and drinking, *i.e.*, the preservation of the body, or the exercise of any other single phase of life, such as thinking, feeling, or willing, but *the unfolding of all human capacities in conformity with the demands of the natural and human environment.* The end is the development of body and mind in harmony with each other, the unfolding of all powers and capacities of the soul, cognitive, emotional, and volitional, in adaptation to both physical and psychical surroundings. A person is realizing

[1] Aristotle, *Ethics*, Bk. I, chap. iii (Welldon's translation): "Thus ordinary or vulgar people conceive it (the good) to be pleasure, and accordingly approve a life of enjoyment. For there are practically three prominent lives, the sensual, the political, and, thirdly, the speculative."

the highest good when his inner life is well ordered or rationalized; when the so-called lower forces are subordinated to the higher spiritual powers; when he is what the Greeks called *σώφρον* (sōphrŏn), or healthy-minded; when his body is the servant and symbol of the soul, and like a good servant does much and demands little; when there is a proper balance between his egoistic and altruistic impulses and acts, — in short, when he is a virtuous man.[1]

When we declare that the end of human striving is the unfolding of human life, we merely indicate the end in vague and general outlines. We cannot give a detailed and definite account of what we mean by human life; we must allow humanity to fill in the content itself. We can tell what life is only by living it. As life is movement, action, the unfolding of capacities, our goal cannot be a fixed or stable one; we cannot imagine that we shall ever reach a

[1] The following quotation, from Huxley's *Science and Education*, will show us what that writer regards as the highest good: "That man, I think, has a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself." p. 86.

point of rest, a stopping-place. The goal is a movable goal; in fact, there is no goal in the sense of a destination to be reached. History and anthropology show us how humanity has moved from ideal to ideal, how there has been a gradual unfolding and differentiation of faculties, how society has advanced from the simple to the complex. We may say that humanity has taken each step consciously, without, however, being aware of what the next step would be. Our thoughts are fixed upon the present and immediate mainly, and now and then we get a faint glimpse of the future and remote. We do the work that lies nearest to us, and pass on to the next problem, without knowing what the solution will be and to what new problems it will give rise. So the human race performs its tasks, and takes up new ones when these are accomplished. We cannot tell what the next problem will be, although, of course, our knowledge of the past will, in a certain measure, enable us to indicate the direction in which the times are moving. As Jhering aptly says: "Wherein the weal and happiness of society consist is a question that cannot be answered by theory. The history of mankind answers it as she unrolls leaf by leaf of her book. Every end attained contains within itself a new one. The first goal must be reached before the next one can be sighted. Of the perfect form of the well-being of mankind we have no idea at all."[1]

[1] *Der Zweck im Recht*, Vol. II, p. 205. See also Höffding, *Ethik*, pp. 103 ff.: "Every achievement of an end is but the begin-

3. *Egoism and Altruism.*[1] — The end or purpose, then, of all human striving, the *summum bonum*, is the preservation and perfection of human life. But the question at once arises, Whose preservation and perfection are we aiming at, our own or that of others? Here again, as we saw before,[2] two answers are usually given. I may regard as the ideal my own good or the good of the race. In the one case we have *egoism*, in the other, *altruism*. Now which of these views is correct?

Let us formulate the problem of egoism and altruism in this way. Let us ask: (*a*) What is the end realized by human action? and (*b*) What is the motive in the mind of the agent?

4. *The Effects of Action.* — Generally speaking, the acts performed by mankind have the tendency to promote individual and social welfare. Whatever may be his motive, it may be said that every individual performs acts which influence, not only himself, but others. The relations between man and man are

ning of a new end. Welfare is therefore not a passive condition, but activity, work, development." See also Wundt, *Ethics*, and Paulsen, *Ethics*, Introduction, and Bk. II, chap. ii, §§ 7 ff.

[1] For views similar to those expressed in the following sections, see the ethical works of Bacon, Cumberland, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler, Hume, A. Smith, J. S. Mill, Bain, Darwin, Sidgwick; Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, chaps. xi–xiv; Stephen, *Science of Ethics*, chap. vi; Höffding, *Ethik*, VIII; Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. vi; Simmel, *Einleitung*, Vol. I, chap. ii; Williams, *Evol. Ethics*, Part II, chaps. v, vi; Harris, *Moral Evolution;* Drummond, *Ascent of Man;* Sutherland, *The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct.*

[2] See chap. iv, § 6.

so close in a civilized community that every member's behavior is bound to produce effects upon the environment as well as upon the agent himself. The man who cares for his body, be his motive what it may, is benefiting others almost as much as himself; while he who has a proper regard for the health of his fellows cannot fail to be benefited in his own person by his action. What benefits my family has a tendency to benefit me, and what benefits me has a tendency to benefit my family. Similarly, what benefits the society in which I live tends to benefit me, and what benefits me tends to benefit the society of which I am a member.[1] "The purely egoistic character of so-called personal virtues, for the assertion of which so much has been written, is a myth. No man can make a sot of himself, or indeed injure himself in any way, without reducing his power to benefit society, and harming those nearest to him."[2] Similarly, "we are accustomed to regard honesty in economic life as a duty to others, but it is no less a duty of the individual to himself. Many proverbs express the experience of the race on this point: Honesty is the best policy; Ill-gotten goods seldom prosper; The biter is sometimes bit; Ill got, ill spent."[3] The organ which performs its own func-

[1] See Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, chaps. xi ff.; Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. vi.

[2] Williams, *A Review of Evolutional Ethics*, Part II, chaps. v and vi.

[3] Paulsen, *Ethics*, p. 385. See Bishop Butler, *Human Nature and other Sermons*, Sermon i; end of Sermon iii; beginning of Sermon v.

tions properly promotes the health of the entire organism, and the health of the whole organism is advantageous to each particular organ. The individual is not an isolated atom, but a part of a whole, influencing the whole and influenced by it.[1]

We cannot, therefore, draw a sharp distinction between egoistic and altruistic acts according to their effects; an act affects not only the agent or another, but both. "There is no act," as Paulsen says,[2] "that does not influence the life of the individual as well as that of the surroundings, and hence cannot and must not be viewed and judged from the standpoint of both individual and general welfare. The traditional classification, which distinguishes between duties toward self and duties toward others, cannot be recognized as a legitimate division. There is no duty toward individual life that cannot be construed as a duty toward others, and no duty toward others that cannot be proved to be a duty toward self." *In its effects* the act is both egoistic and altruistic. We may regard such acts as tend to promote both individual and social welfare as the products of evolution. Persons performing acts benefiting themselves, but interfering with the welfare of the group in which they lived, as well as persons performing acts benefiting the group, but injuring themselves, perished in the struggle for existence. Such persons,

[1] See the systems of Cumberland and Shaftesbury, chap. vii, §§ 9, 10.

[2] *Ethics*, p. 383.

however, as learned to perform acts benefiting both themselves and the community, survived, and transmitted their modes of behavior to their offspring, either by heredity or education, or both.

5. *The Motives of Action.* — Some thinkers divide acts into egoistic and altruistic *according to the motives* of the agent who performs them. Egoistic acts are such as are prompted solely by regard for self; altruistic acts are such as are prompted solely by regard for others. And it is asserted by some that there are no real altruistic acts in this sense; that all acts are egoistic or instigated by a selfish motive.

Thus Hobbes holds that every individual strives to preserve himself, that whatever furthers his own well-being is desired by him, that he cares for others only in so far as they are means to his own welfare. But since every other individual has the same object in view, and since this object cannot be realized unless each individual makes certain concessions to his fellows, men also act for the good of others.[1]

According to Mandeville,[2] "all actions including the so-called virtues spring from vanity and egoism." Shaftesbury is wrong in assuming the existence of unselfish affections or impulses. Man is by nature self-seeking, fear makes him social. Actions which apparently imply the sacrifice of selfish inclinations

[1] Chap. vii, § 7. This view was opposed by Cumberland. See chap. vii, § 9.

[2] *Fable of the Bees; or Private Vices Public Benefits*, 1714; written in opposition to Shaftesbury's system.

for the good of society are really done out of pride and self-love. And this is as it should be. "Greed, extravagance, envy, ambition, and rivalry are the roots of the acquisitive impulse, and contribute more to the public good than benevolence and the control of desire."[1] Hence the welfare of society really depends upon the vice (egoistic impulses) of its members. A similar view had already been expressed by La Rochefoucauld,[2] who regards *amour-propre*, or self-love, as the only motive to human action, and La Bruyère.[3] Lamettrie,[4] the materialist, is also an egoist in ethics, as are also Helvétius,[5] Frederick the Great, Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Holbach, the author of the *Système de la nature*.[6]

Helvétius holds that there is but one really original and innate impulse in man — *amour-propre*, self-love. Self-love is the source of all our desires and emotions; all other dispositions are acquired. Morality is made possible by educating men to see their own interest in the general interest. The expectation of reward is the only motive to morality; if it were not to our interest to love virtue, there would be no virtue.[7]

[1] Quoted from Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, translated by Armstrong, pp. 202, 203.

[2] In his *Réflexions, ou sentences et maximes morales*, 1665.

[3] In his *Les charactères et les mœurs de ce siècle*, 1687.

[4] 1709–1751. [5] See chap. ii, § 6 (3). [6] 1776.

[7] See also Paley and Bentham, whose systems are given in chap. vi. Hartley and his school regard the egoistic impulses as primary, and sympathy as secondary or derivative. With this view, Jhering, *Zweck im Recht*, Vol. II, agrees. The following claim

6. *Criticism of Egoism.* — This theory seems to me to be false. It is not true that the sole motive of human action is the preservation and advancement of self. To say that an act was prompted by a selfish motive may mean one of two things. It may mean either (*a*) that the agent had his own welfare clearly in view in performing the act, that is, that he knew that it was going to benefit him and desired it for that reason; or it may mean (*b*) that he desired certain acts which happened to be advantageous to him, without, however, knowing that they were so.

(1) If we interpret egoism in the first sense, then, it seems to me, many acts which are called egoistic are really neither egoistic nor altruistic; that is, the doer of them is not conscious of the purpose they realize. The mere fact that an animal desires an act which turns out to be self-preservative will not allow us to infer that there was a selfish motive behind it. When the cat runs after the mouse, she cannot really be said to care for herself, but for the mouse. She desires the mouse for its own sake, and has no idea of benefiting herself. "Our *interest in things*," says Professor James, "means the attention and emotion which the thought of them will excite, and the actions which their presence will

that both egoism and sympathy are original: Bacon, Cumberland, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler, Hume, A. Smith, J. S. Mill, Bain, Darwin, Sidgwick, Spencer, Stephen, Paulsen, and Höffding; and in fact, almost all the modern psychologists.

evoke. Thus every species is particularly interested in its own prey or food, its own enemies, its own sexual mates, and its own young. These things fascinate by their intrinsic power to do so; they are cared for for their own sakes. What my comrades call my bodily selfishness or self-love, is nothing but the sum of all the outer acts which this interest in my body spontaneously draws from me. My 'selfishness' is here but a descriptive name for grouping together the outward symptoms which I show. When I am led by self-love to keep my seat whilst ladies stand, or to grab something first and cut out my neighbor, what I really love is the comfortable seat, is the thing itself which I grab. I love them primarily, as the mother loves her babe, or a generous man an heroic deed. Wherever, as here, self-seeking is the outcome of simple instinctive propensity, it is but a name for certain reflex acts. Something rivets my attention fatally, and fatally provokes the 'selfish' response. Could an automaton be so skilfully constructed as to ape these acts, it would be called selfish as properly as I. It is true that I am no automaton, but a thinker. But my thoughts, like my acts, are here concerned only with the outward things. They need neither know nor care for any pure principle within. In fact, the more utterly 'selfish' I am in this primitive way, the more blindly absorbed my thought will be in the objects and impulses of my lusts, and the more devoid of any inward-looking glance. A baby, whose

consciousness of the pure Ego, of himself as a thinker, is not usually supposed developed, is, in this way, as some German has said, 'der vollendetste Egoist.'" [1]

(2) If, however, we interpret egoism in the second sense, and say that such acts are selfish which happen to be advantageous to the agent (even without his knowing it), then, again, it is not true that all acts are egoistic. For many acts are performed and desired by animals as well as men, which are beneficial not only to the individual who performs them, but also to the species to which he belongs, as we have already seen. That is to say, human beings do not perform and desire only acts which are conducive to their own welfare.

(3) It is not true that we care for ourselves alone. We care for ourselves and we care for others.[2] The

[1] James, *Psychology*, Vol. I, pp. 320 f. See also Hume, *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix II, end: "In the same manner, there are mental passions, by which we are impelled immediately to seek particular objects, such as fame, or power, or vengeance, without any regard to interest; and when these objects are attained, a pleasing enjoyment ensues, as the consequence of our indulged affections. Nature must, by the internal frame and constitution of the mind, give an original propensity to fame ere we can reap any pleasure from that acquisition, or pursue it from motives of self-love, and a desire of happiness. In all these cases, there is a passion which points immediately to the object, and constitutes it our good or happiness; as there are other secondary passions which afterward arise, and pursue it as a part of our happiness, when once it is constituted such by our original affections. Were there no appetite of any kind antecedent to self-love, that propensity could scarcely ever exert itself," etc.

[2] Ladd, *Psychology*, p. 586: "In concrete fact, men think and

assertion that we care for ourselves alone falls as short of the truth as the assertion that we care for others alone. As a matter of fact, every human being is both egoistic or selfish, and altruistic or unselfish. Parents who love their children and are willing to sacrifice certain comforts in life in order that their children may prosper, are altruistic; the soldier who takes up arms in defence of his country, from love of his country, has some unselfish motives. Indeed, just as the effects of acts tend to both personal and general good, so the motives may be both egoistic and altruistic. It is a mistake to suppose that every act has but one motive.[1] Many motives combine to influence the will to action. Every man desires to live, it is true, but he also desires to keep his family alive, to be a useful member of the community, to help others. He does not live for himself alone. "There is," says Hume,[2] "some benevolence, however small, infused into our bosom; some spark of friendship for human kind; some particle of the dove kneaded into our frame along with the elements of the wolf and serpent. Let these generous sentiments be supposed ever so weak; let them be insufficient to move even a hand or finger of our body; they must still direct the determinations of our mind, and, where everything else is

feel far less with direct reference to self than is ordinarily supposed."

[1] See Darwin, quoted in chap. viii, § 7 (1).

[2] *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Section IV.

equal, produce a cool preference of what is useful and serviceable to mankind to what is pernicious and dangerous."[1]

The mission of the individual seems to be to live and let live. His impulses are turned in the direction of self-preservation and the preservation of his species. This means that he desires acts which tend to preserve himself and others. He need not know that they have these results; but he may become aware of the utility of such acts, and then perform them consciously, in order to realize the end reached by them. Nature often works in the dark, as it were; the object may be realized without the individual's knowing what it is, or consciously aiming at it.

7. *Selfishness and Sympathy.* — But, it may be asked, is not the conscious desire to benefit oneself stronger as a motive than that to advance others? We must confess that, generally speaking, it is. The individual desires to live, first of all; then he desires the life of others. This is as it should be. Each individual must perform acts which make for

[1] See also Section V, Part II, note: "It is needless to push our researches so far as to ask why we have humanity, or a fellow-feeling with others. It is sufficient that this is experienced to be a principle of human nature. We must stop somewhere in our examination of causes; and there are, in every science, some general principles, beyond which we cannot hope to find any principle more general. No man is absolutely indifferent to the happiness and misery of others." See Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. vi; Williams, *Evolutional Ethics*, pp. 383 ff.; Darwin, *Descent of Man*, chap. iv; Simmel, *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, Vol. I, chap. ii; Lipps, *Ethische Grundfragen*, Lecture I.

self-preservation, and it is to be supposed that the work can be best performed by the person directly interested. But, as was noticed before, the acts tending to realize his purpose do not necessarily run counter to the acts of others. He may advance himself without interfering with others; indeed, by looking out for himself and his interests, he in a large measure advances the interests of the whole of which he forms a part, and at the same time puts himself in the position to benefit others more directly. Still, there is a point beyond which individual aspirations cannot well go without causing injury to others. A person's conscious desire to advance himself may become so strong, or external conditions may become such, as to tempt him to seek his own welfare at the expense of that of his surroundings.[1] In order to hinder this result and to keep each individual on his own ground, moral codes have been developed, and these in turn have led to the development of moral feelings. In other words, morality is the outgrowth of the conflict between individual interests. When one individual injures another in the struggle for existence, he arouses the resentment of the latter, as well as the sympathetic resentment of all disinterested spectators. The combined feelings and impulses aroused by the aggres-

[1] It is also possible that a person's sympathy may lead him to perform acts which are dangerous to the community, and that his selfishness may injure him. Wherever his acts tend to harm the community, they are disapproved.

sor's selfishness give birth to injunctions: Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not. In the course of time, as has been already explained, the moral sentiments are developed, and come to the rescue of the sympathetic feelings when these are in danger of being overwhelmed by selfishness. If it were not for the fact that human beings come in conflict with each other in their desire to live, there would be no need of the moral law. Moral laws aim to hinder conduct which makes impossible social life, or rather such conduct as a group of men have found by experience, or believe, to be antagonistic to their purposes.[1]

8. *Moral Motive and Moral Action.* — Men, then, are neither purely egoistic nor purely altruistic, whether we judge their conduct from the standpoint of the motive or from the standpoint of the effect. We may now ask: (*a*) How *ought* they to *feel* in order to be called moral? and (*b*) How *ought* they to *act* in order to be called moral?

(1) Schopenhauer declares that no act has moral worth unless it is the result of pure altruistic feeling, unless it is actuated by the weal or woe of another. If the motive which impels me to action is my own welfare, my act has no moral worth at all. Fichte goes so far as to say: "There is but *one* virtue, and that is to forget oneself as a person; but *one* vice, to think of oneself. Whoever in the slightest degree

[1] See article on the "Moral Law," in the *International Journal of Ethics*, January, 1900.

thinks of his own personality, and desires a life and existence and any self-enjoyment whatsoever, except for the species, is fundamentally and radically, a petty, low, wicked, and wretched fellow."[1]

This is a one-sided view, in my opinion. The question at issue here is not, What must be a man's motive in order that you or I may regard him as moral? but, What must be his motive in order that he be regarded moral in the judgment of the race? Now, are only such acts approved of by mankind as are prompted by a purely altruistic motive?

We can hardly claim it. In the first place, as has already been pointed out, we judge of acts subjectively and objectively.[2] We often regard an act as objectively moral regardless of the motives prompting it. Besides, as has also been said, our motives are always complex; they are never absolutely egoistic or absolutely altruistic, but mixed. We do not necessarily call a man immoral because he cares for his own welfare, as Fichte holds that we ought to do; nor do we call an act that is prompted by a mixture of self-regarding and other-regarding feelings non-moral. We commend a person who is industrious and useful because he desires to support himself and family. It is not necessary that a man do what he does from a purely altruistic motive and no other. He may act from a sense of duty, as we have shown in our chapter on Conscience, and as Kant declares

[1] *Characteristics of the Present Age*, § 70.

[2] See chap. v, § 9 (*b*).

he must act in order that his act may have moral worth at all.

Still, it must be confessed that, if his motive were absolutely egoistic, that is, if he did what he did merely in order to benefit himself, regardless of the weal and woe of others, if he had no spark of sympathy in him, we should not regard him as a moral man. Indeed, we should regard him as an abnormal human being, as a perverse character. The reason for this is perhaps to be sought in the fact that an extreme egoist would be apt to endanger social life. A man who thinks of himself all the time and of himself only, will, unless he be exceedingly shrewd, injure others. The feelings of sympathy and brotherly love, and the feelings of moral approval, disapproval, and obligation, will, on the other hand, tend to give his conduct a more altruistic direction and thereby promote social welfare. The ends of morality can, therefore, be best subserved by human beings who have sympathetic feelings and impulses in addition to their self-regarding feelings and impulses. This is the reason why the sympathetic motive is valued, and why acts springing from pure egoism are often regarded as not falling within the scope of morals. But it must not be forgotten: (*a*) that egoism is not condemned morally as long as it does not conflict with altruism; (*b*) that when it coöperates with altruism to produce good results, it receives moral approval; (*c*) that when its absence causes harm, the lack of it is condemned. The

suicide who cares nothing for his own life receives the moral disapproval of mankind.

(2) It is held by some that the good of humanity is best achieved by the unimpeded play of egoism.[1] Man should satisfy his desire for power; he ought to live for himself and not for others, and not allow himself to be moved by compassion or pity, which is the virtue of weaklings. Everything is right that increases man's consciousness of power, his desire for power, and his power. Let the weaklings and unhealthy perish, and help them to perish. The strongest ought to rule, the weak obey. The anarchist and the Christian, says Nietzsche, are made of the same stuff; they are both rooted in sympathy, and seek to hamper the progress of the individual. A similar view is frequently advanced by evolutionists. Life is governed by the struggle for existence, and those most fitted for the fray are selected (survival of the fittest). Only when this principle is allowed to act without hindrance can the best results be obtained. Altruism is a means of injuring the race, not a means of preservation, for it makes possible the survival of the weak, of all individuals not adapted to their environment. Our sympathy impels us to care for and to preserve the weak, the sick, the crippled, and the insane, elements in our population which the free play of egoism would eliminate, and ought to be allowed to eliminate, for the perfection of the race.

[1] See, for example, Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, and Nietzsche's writings.

We answer: The human race would not have reached its present state of development without the aid of sympathy and coöperation. It is the social instinct in animals which enables them to act together, and it is this tendency to coöperate which gives them advantages over other species. In union there is strength. A group of men can accomplish more than each individual singly. If there were no altruism in the race, what would become of offspring? Would social life be possible if men did not desire to live with their fellows, and is not this desire to associate with kind altruism?

Sympathy and coöperation are useful to the race. If they were not, or if they were harmful, they would be eliminated. The sympathetic impulses, however, do not seem to be growing weaker, but stronger. Of course, extreme sympathy is dangerous, as dangerous as extreme egoism. Neither our egoistic nor our sympathetic impulses are good or bad as such; they are made so by the controlling influence of reason. Irrational sympathy is bad, and harmful to the race, and ought to be eliminated. And the same remarks apply to irrational egoism. "Social harmony can never be reached by the stubborn continuance of each in his line of inharmonious conduct, but can only be attained by such gradual moulding of habit and desire, that by natural organization individuals will come to be in harmony with each other. It is the history of social evolution that the individual, though always determining what are

his own needs, as it is obvious that he can best do, is increasingly aided in satisfying them by coöperation, while he also gives increasing aid in return. Against the list of the advantages of egoism enumerated by Spencer and others, I would muster the advantages of altruism, for by coöperation alone can the individual attain the pleasures which now so often lie beyond his reach; by it alone can society attain a higher plane; and the pleasures of altruism are the highest and most unfailing. The selfish man will suffer disappointment and loss as well as the benevolent man, and he will lack the refuge of sympathy, and of the power to find happiness in the happiness of others. What man who has felt the joys of sympathy would exchange even the hardships it brings for the brutal liberty and unmoved selfishness of the savage; what man who has known the joys of the higher, the more unselfish, love, would exchange them for the ungoverned and quickly palling pleasures of the profligate? Those joys first lend life worth and meaning; through association and altruism, coöperation in action and feeling, man first becomes a power in the world. Yet the man who is capable of the higher sympathy is incapable of a selfish calculation of its personal advantages to him."[1]

(3) And now let us look at the acts regardless of the motives which have prompted them. Do we

[1] Williams, *A Review of Evolutional Ethics*, chap. viii, p. 513. See also Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. vi, § 5.

demand that personal interests be invariably sacrificed to the interests of others? And must we make this sacrifice in every case in order to subserve the ends of morality? I do not believe it. We do not expect a person to sacrifice his important interests to the unimportant interests of another. It is right and proper that a person should sacrifice himself for the real interests of his family; but it is not necessary that he should sacrifice himself in order that his wife and children might enjoy things which were never intended for them. It is right and proper for me to offer up my life in the defence of my country; but it cannot be required that I sacrifice myself in order to save a lady's pug dog from being run over by a carriage. It is right that I should deny myself many pleasures and comforts for the sake of helping others; but it is not right that I should ruin my health and impede my own intellectual development in order to keep a drunken loafer out of the poorhouse.

In order that the ends of morality may be realized, men must be altruistic, of course. They must work for others, and they must be able to make sacrifices for others. But they cannot work for others without first working for themselves. They cannot care for themselves in the proper way if they allow their care for others to go too far. We may say, I believe, that each man ought to care for his own good, for the good of his family, for his neighbors, his town, his county, his state, his nation, and humanity

at large. He should work from the centre to the periphery, that is, protect and advance his own interests and those of his family, and then those of farther circles. Charity begins at home.[1] "It is wisely ordained by nature," says Hume, "that private connections should commonly prevail over universal views and considerations; otherwise our affections and actions would be dissipated and lost for want of a proper limited object. Thus a small benefit done to ourselves or our near friends, excites more lively sentiments of love and approbation, than a great benefit done to a distant commonwealth."[2]

9. *Biology and the Highest Good.* — Biology, too, will give us some hints concerning the direction of life or the ideal toward which we are making. On the lowest stages of animal existence life consists wholly in the acquisition of food and in attempts to ward off unfavorable external influences. If there are any psychical processes at all, they are exceedingly simple. Gradually, however, sexual and social impulses arise, the intelligence develops, and we have the beginnings of social and intellectual life which reach their highest stage in man. As conscious life develops the so-called lower faculties are subordinated to the higher ones, the sensuous feelings and impulses are placed under the control of the reason, and are regarded as inferior to the others; the egoistic feelings and impulses yield, in a large measure,

[1] See Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. vi, pp. 391 ff.

[2] *Principles of Morals*, Section V, Part II.

to sympathetic feelings and impulses, and the individual is subordinated to society. The spiritual forces are unfolded, the spiritual me takes precedence in the hierarchy of the mes of the material me. The so-called lower functions are not, of course, neglected; they are exercised, on the one hand, for their own sake, as partial ends in themselves, but they are especially conceived as means to higher ends — the unfolding of the spiritual powers. Similarly, the individual comes to be regarded, on the one hand, as a whole, as an end in himself, and, on the other, as a part of a wider whole, as a part of humanity. We may liken this relation to the relation which the different members of an organism bear to the entire organism. The heart, the brain, the hands, the eyes, the muscles, the bones, etc., are all means to an end, the preservation of the body. But they are at the same time parts of the body; they are the body, and hence means of preserving themselves.[1] The welfare of the body depends upon the welfare of its organs, and the welfare of the organs depends upon the welfare of the whole. In a perfect organism the parts work harmoniously to a common end. The parts are means to an end (seeing is a means to an end), and yet ends in themselves (seeing is valuable in itself). So the individual is both a means to an end and an end in himself.

We may safely assert, I believe, that history is

[1] See Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. ii, § 7.

tending toward the further development of spiritual life and toward a fuller realization of the individual in society. We may say that humanity will continue to advance in intelligence and morality, that mankind will gain a deeper insight into the workings of psychical and physical nature, and a larger control over reality, and that there will be less friction between the different members of society and the different societies themselves.[1]

10. *Morality and the Highest Good.* — We have found thus far, I believe, that the preservation and promotion of individual and social life is the highest good, or the end aimed at by humanity, in the sense explained before. That is, the individual human being strives to preserve and advance himself as well as those persons with whom he sympathizes. At first the sympathetic impulse is both weak and narrow in its scope, being limited to the members of a small group. In the course of time, however, the consciousness of kind develops more and more, the feeling of sympathy increases in intensity, and extends to wider and wider circles. A glance at the growth of religions, which always embody the conceptions and ideals of men, exemplifies this gradual extension of other-regarding or sympathetic feelings. There is an advance from the narrow family religion through the universal type to the universal religion of Christianity.[2] The history of Greece and Rome

[1] See Sutherland, *Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct.*

[2] See Sir Henry Maine, *Early Law and Custom*, p. 57.

also shows a gradual progress of sympathy.[1] Of Rome Lecky says: "The moral expression of the first period is obviously to be found in the narrower military and patriotic virtues; that of the second period in enlarged philanthropy and sympathy."[2] Our sympathies are widening and deepening in modern times, as witness universal peace congresses, demands for international arbitration, protests against the barbarities practised in many of the less civilized countries, the progress of socialism, the building of hospitals and other charitable institutions, the establishment of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals. We care not only for ourselves as individuals and as a nation, but for humanity in general.

But the time has not yet come when there will be no more conflicts between self-regarding impulses and acts, and other-regarding impulses and acts. The selfishness of the individual is apt to overwhelm his sympathy in many instances, and to lead him to encroach upon the domain of others. He is, however, kept in check by the self-assertion of those upon whose claims he trespasses, as well as by the sympathetic opposition of his fellows. Rules gradually come into existence forbidding certain modes of conduct and enjoining others. Certain acts arouse in consciousness the moral sentiments referred to before, and we have moral codes. Morality is therefore developed as a necessary means of realizing the

[1] Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. I, pp. 228 f
[2] *Ib.*, Vol. I, p. 239.

highest good, or the unconditional desires of the human race. If the highest good could be realized without a moral code, as we intimated before, there would be no moral laws, or any other laws, for that matter. Laws are made to hinder certain things and to enforce others, and arise only after the particular actions have taken place. In a certain sense, therefore, the lawbreakers are the lawmakers.

One thing I should like to emphasize here, and that is that morality is a means to an end; that, generally speaking, the moral code embraces only such rules as make it possible for human beings to realize the end or purpose or highest good. Morality aims to remove all the obstacles in the way of the end. It is not the embodiment of all the aims and strivings of the race. It is not so comprehensive as to guide the individual in all his attempts to realize the highest good. In other words, not all modes of conduct are felt as obligatory which satisfy the desires of the race. Only such acts will gather around them the moral sentiments as are commanded by the race, and only such will be commanded, in the main, as are absolutely necessary, or are believed to be necessary, to the life of society.

The moral code, then, does not embrace the whole of conduct. Life and its ideals are broader than morality. The aims and ideals of humanity are not exhausted by the aims of morality. Without morality humanity cannot reach its goal; morality is the *conditio sine qua non*, but the fulfilment of the

law alone will not realize the aspirations of mankind.[1] To illustrate: The laws of hygiene must be observed in order that I may reach my goal; the laws of hygiene are means to a higher end; obedience to them is an essential condition of the realization of my hopes and aspirations. But it does not follow from this that if I obey them my aims will be realized. My aims are broader than the aims of hygiene. So my aims as a human being are broader than my aims as a moral being; they include the laws of morality, but are not exhausted by them.

Another point needs emphasis. The purpose of the moral law, we may say, is to make possible individual and social life. Moral acts tend to promote individual and social welfare. Morality draws the circle, as it were, within which human beings may safely pursue their ends without doing injury to each other. Stealing, lying, and murder tend to injure both the agent and his environment; therefore the command, Do not steal, lie, or murder. Honesty, truthfulness, and self-control tend to promote the welfare of the man who possesses these virtues as well as of his surroundings; therefore, be truthful, honest, and moderate.

If the view advanced in the foregoing is correct, we can draw certain conclusions. If morality is in the service of the ideal or highest good, then it must, in a measure, be dependent on this ideal. Changes in the ideals of the race will lead to changes in the

[1] See Münsterberg, *Ursprung der Sittlichkeit*, IV, pp. 98 ff.

moral code. Now we have already noticed that ideals change and grow. One age and people is more combative or more peace-loving, or more selfish or more sympathetic than another, and will therefore emphasize the virtue of courage or submission or self-assertion or benevolence. Where the ideal is an ascetic one, the moral law will prohibit forms of conduct which are not only regarded as totally indifferent, but even essential in societies aiming, say, at physical advancement. The care which the ancient Greek bestowed upon his body seemed not only foolish, but sinful, to the mediæval saint. Where the ideal is a political one, it is regarded as the duty of the citizen to take part in politics. When the sphere of persons sympathized with is a narrow one, as is frequently the case at the beginnings of historical life, the moral code embraces only the members of the same tribe or nation. The Greeks regarded all foreigners as barbarians and enemies, and the Jews always looked upon themselves as the chosen people of God.[1]

Now it frequently happens that the moral code of a people does not keep step with its ideals; indeed, it may even be an impediment to the realization of the highest good. In such cases a conflict is apt to ensue between the old and the new. The conserva-

[1] Foreigner and enemy originally meant the same thing; think of the words ξενός and *hostis*. See Rée, *Entstehung des Gewissens*, p. 150; Hearn, *Aryan Household*, p. 19; M'Lennan, *Primitive Marriage*, p. 107; and others quoted by Rée.

tive element will cling to the old rules, while the younger generation will turn its face to the future. When Jesus Christ preached the doctrine of universal brotherly love, and changed the old narrow Hebrew conception of God and His relation to man, he made a change in morality absolutely necessary.

Even where ideals remain practically stable, conditions may change to such an extent as to make old forms of conduct useless and even harmful, and new ones necessary. But human beings are creatures of habit, and look with suspicion on the new. Consequently, certain modes of conduct are often continued and enjoined as right long after they have lost their *raison d'être*.[1]

But there are many modes of conduct which remain moral in spite of all changes in ideals, and they are those without the observance of which no earthly ideal can ever be realized. No community can exist and pursue ideals, in which falsehood, murder, and treachery thrive. Even a band of thieves must obey some of the laws of morality in order to be able to live together at all. Only in case the ideal were *death* and ruin instead of life and happiness, would the commonly accepted rules of morality have to give way to others. A community seeking death instead of life, ought not to foster the virtues of truth, honor, loyalty, honesty, justice, and chastity, for these are the very life of life. "The wages of sin is death."

[1] See Paulsen's *Ethics*, Introduction.

11. *Conclusion.* — Our conclusion is this: The *summum bonum* or highest good is that which human beings universally strive after for its own sake, which for them has absolute worth. It differs for different nations and times, depending upon different inner and outer conditions. Hence it is not possible to give a detailed picture of the highest good. All that we can do is to observe the similarities existing between the different ideals of humanity, and to embrace these under a general formula or principle. This formula or principle is, of course, bound to be vague and indefinite, a mere outline of the general direction of human strivings. We defined it as the preservation and unfolding of individual and social, physical and spiritual life, in adaptation to the surroundings. Whatever rules are developed by mankind for the realization of the highest good, and produce the moral sentiments referred to before, are called moral rules. The object of these rules is to make the realization of the ideal possible. Morality is a means to an end, just as law is a means to an end. But in the case of morality the rules must, generally speaking, arouse certain sentiments, such as obligation, approval, disapproval, etc. Hence moral facts are characterized by the effects which acts and motives have upon the consciousness of the individuals as well as upon their general welfare.

The knowledge we have gained thus far will enable us to examine the different moral codes, and

to criticize them. We can now judge of a people's conduct in a more rational way; we can tell whether the race is realizing its purpose, the highest good. We can also tell what modes of conduct are necessary to the realization of the ideal, and say that they *ought* to be pursued. This part of our problem would belong to practical ethics.

CHAPTER X

OPTIMISM *VERSUS* PESSIMISM[1]

1. *Optimism and Pessimism.* — We said that the end or aim of human life, *i.e.*, the highest good, was the exercise of human functions. This means, of course, that human beings set a value upon things, that they regard certain ends as having absolute worth for them. They value their lives and those of others; they prize development and progress for its own sake. In other words, they regard life as worth living, as good, as the *best* thing for them (*optimum*). We may call this view *optimism.*

This conception is opposed by a set of thinkers who declare that life is *not* worth living, that it is not a good, but an evil, not the *best* thing, but the worst thing (*pessimum*). We may call this theory *pessimism.*

[1] Dühring, *Der Werth des Lebens;* Hartmann, *Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Pessimismus;* Sully, *Pessimism, A History and Criticism;* Sommer, *Der Pessimismus und die Sittenlehre;* Plümacher, *Der Pessimismus in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart;* Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chaps. iii, iv, vii; Wallace, "Pessimism," *Encyclopedia Britannica;* Lubbock, *The Pleasures of Life.* See the bibliography in Sully's *Pessimism*, pp. xvii, xix. For much that is contained in the following chapter I am indebted to Paulsen's admirable chapters on "Pessimism," "The Evil, the Bad and Theodicy," and "Virtue and Happiness."

Let us examine this view somewhat more in detail. There are two ways of treating the subject. I may say that *my* life is not worth living, that *I* do not care for it, that *to me* it seems an evil rather than a good. Here I offer no proofs for my statements, but simply express my personal feelings toward life, my individual attitude toward it. This is *subjective* or unscientific pessimism. Or I may attempt to *prove* scientifically that life in general is not worth living, that it is unreasonable or illogical for any one to care for it. This is *objective* or scientific or philosophical pessimism. We shall have occasion to refer to both forms in the course of the following discussion.

2. *Subjective Pessimism.* — Lord Bacon gives us a characteristic estimate of the value of life in these pessimistic lines : —

> "The world's a bubble, and the life of man
> Less than a span:
> In his conception wretched, from the womb
> So to the tomb;
> Curst from his cradle, and brought up to years
> With cares and fears.
> Who then to frail mortality shall trust,
> But limns on water, or but writes in dust."

Shakespeare's Hamlet expresses himself in a similar strain : —

> "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me the uses of this world;
> Fie on't, oh, fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden
> That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
> Possess it merely."

And Keats in his *Ode to the Nightingale* draws an equally mournful picture of the world in which his unhappy lot has been cast: —

"Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new love pine at them beyond to-morrow."

These pessimistic utterances, however, prove nothing but the temporary mood of the poet who gives vent to them. They are common to every age and every clime, and are symptoms of the weariness and disappointment that lay hold upon the race in its struggle toward perfection. There is scarcely a person living who does not sometimes succumb to the black demon of melancholy, who does not at times long "to lie down like a tired child and weep away this life of care." And we may say that he is none the worse for it. Pessimistic broodings are like the storm-clouds that gather on the horizon, and in a healthy life pass away as quickly as they came, leaving the mental atmosphere calm and pure. It is only when such moods become chronic and permanent that they prove dangerous to both the individual and the race, for unless we regard life as worth living we shall not live it as it ought to be lived.

There are persons, however, with whom pessimism is not merely a passing feeling, but a philosophic creed. A man may, like Hamlet or Faust, look upon life as burdensome to him, and express himself to that effect. When Hamlet says that the world seems weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable *to him*, we cannot refute him, because he is simply telling how the world affects him, what feelings it arouses in him. His feelings are facts, and as such incontrovertible. When you tell me that you do not value life, that you prefer death to life, and wish you had never been born, I cannot refute you any more than you can refute me when I say that I love life and am glad I am here. We are both simply giving expression to our feelings, and no one knows better how we feel than we ourselves. *De gustibus non disputandum.*

3. *Scientific Pessimism.* — But when you dogmatically declare that life is not worth living, that there is nothing in it for anybody, that it has absolutely no value, that instead of being a blessing it is a curse, you are making general assertions which call for proof. You are advancing a theory of life which shall be valid for all, and theories can be proved and refuted. You will have to show *why* life is not worth living; you will have to give *reasons* for your view, and reasons we can examine and criticise. Now, it can be shown, I believe, that pessimism as a philosophic creed is untenable, and that the optimistic conception of life is far more rational.[1]

[1] Philosophical pessimists: Schopenhauer, *World as Will and*

Let us see. The pessimist may argue that life is not worth living because it does not realize the end or goal desired by man. Life is worthless because it fails to yield what human beings most prize, because it fails to realize the *summum bonum* or the highest good. Hence, to desire life is to desire something you really do not want, — an exceedingly senseless procedure.

But what is the highest good? it may be asked; what is the goal at which we are all aiming? There are as many different forms of pessimism as there are answers to this question. Let us consider some of them.

(*a*) The highest good is knowledge, one pessimist may argue; life does not realize it for us, we do not and cannot know anything; hence, life is not worth living. Let us call this *intellectual* pessimism. It is preached by such characters as Faust: —

> "I've studied now Philosophy,
> And Jurisprudence, Medicine, —
> And even, alas, Theology, —
> From end to end, with labor keen;
> And here, poor fool, with all my lore
> I stand no wiser than before." [1]

(*b*) The highest good is pleasure or happiness, says another pessimist. Now life does not realize

Idea, English translation by Haldane and Kemp, Vol. I, Bk. IV; Vol. II, Appendix to Bk. IV; *Parerga*, chaps. xi, xii, xiv; Bahnsen, *Zur Philosophie der Geschichte;* Mainländer, *Die Philosophie der Erlösung;* Hartmann, *Die Philosophie des Unbewussten*, translated by Coupland. Consult Sully's bibliography referred to before, and read his preface to the second edition.

[1] Bayard Taylor's translation of Goethe's *Faust.*

this end; indeed, it yields more pain than pleasure; hence, life is a failure. We find traces of this view, which we might call *emotional* pessimism, in the Old Testament, as, indeed, we are bound to find them in every book that holds the mirror up to the soul of man. "For what hath man of all his labor, and of all the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath labored under the sun. For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night." "The days of our age are threescore years and ten, and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years: yet is their strength then but labor and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone."

(*c*) No, says still another, the highest good is virtue; life does not realize virtue, men are wicked, the world is thoroughly bad; hence, life in a world like this is not worth living. "The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill." This way of looking at the world let us characterize as *volitional* pessimism.

4. *Intellectual Pessimism.* — All these syllogisms contain unproved premises. Take the first. Knowledge is the highest good, knowledge is impossible, we do not know anything and we cannot know anything. In the first place, knowledge is not the highest good, but a part of the good, a means to an end. As we said before, the goal for which we are striving is a mixed life of knowledge, feeling, and

willing. The perfect or well-rounded man is not one in whom the intellectual faculties are developed at the expense of the emotional and volitional elements, but one who knows, feels, and wills in a normal manner. Besides, it cannot be said that we know nothing and can know nothing, nor can it be said that we are growing more ignorant in the course of history. We may not be able to discover the ultimate essences of things, or to solve all the riddles of existence, but our knowledge is sufficient to guide us in the practical affairs of life. We are gaining a deeper insight into the workings of nature, and our power over the world is increasing in consequence. The wonderful progress that has been made in modern technics is undoubtedly due to our improved knowledge of the laws of the physical universe, and it is safe to predict that we shall make even greater advances along these lines in the future. But we have learned from experience in all departments of life, and are doing our work much better than it has been done in the past, and succeeding generations will most likely improve upon our methods.

5. *Emotional Pessimism.* — This form of pessimism is also open to criticism. Let us see. Pleasure or happiness is the highest good. Life does not procure it for us; hence life is not good. But pleasure is not the end of life, as we have already pointed out; pleasure or happiness is a means to a higher end and a part of that end. However, let us waive this point,

and examine the other statement, the one that life yields more pain than pleasure. There are two possible ways of arguing for the truth of this assertion. We must either show, by reference to experience, that the world is a vale of tears, which would give us an *inductive* proof; or we must prove on *a priori* grounds that life cannot possibly be happy, that human nature and the very universe itself are so constituted as to preclude the possibility of such a thing.

(1) Now, I ask, can either proof be furnished? Pessimists are fond of telling us that life yields a surplus of pain, that the balance is on the pain side of the ledger. But it is impossible to make the necessary calculations in this field. Take your own individual existence. Can you say that a particular pain is more painful than a particular pleasure is pleasurable? Then can you add up the different pleasures and pains which you have experienced during a single day or hour of your life, and compare the results? And can you, in like manner, compute the pleasures and pains of your entire life, and say that your pains exceed your pleasures? And if you cannot give a safe estimate of the pleasures and pains of your own life, with which you are reasonably familiar, how can you make the calculations for others, and for the entire race, and say that they suffer more than they enjoy? How can you say that the amount of pleasure realized by one individual is counterbalanced or exceeded by the pain suffered by another?

(2) The great German pessimist, Schopenhauer, attempts to prove *deductively*, from the nature of man's will, that life yields more pains than pleasures. Life consists of blind cravings which are painful so long as they are not satisfied. When I desire a thing and do not get it, I am miserable ; when I get it I am satisfied for a moment, and then desire something else, and am miserable again. I am never permanently satisfied ; I am constantly yearning for something I do not possess ; there is a worm in every flower. "Every human life oscillates between desire and fulfilment. Wishes are by their very nature painful ; their realization soon sates us ; the goal was but an illusion ; possession takes away the desire, but the wish reappears under a new form ; if not, emptiness, hollowness, ennui, *Langeweile*, results, which is as much of a torture as want."[1] I go on hoping for better things day in, day out, but they never come. One illusion merely gives way to another. I keep on longing and longing until the angel of death takes pity on me and folds me under his wing. Each particular day brings me nearer to the grave, the awful end of it all. Touchstone is right when he soliloquizes : —

> "It is ten o'clock.
> Thus may we see, quoth he, how the world wags :
> 'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine;
> And after an hour more 'twill be eleven;

[1] Schopenhauer's Works, Frauenstädt's edition, *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, p. 370.

And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
And then from hour to hour we rot and rot;
And thereby hangs a tale!"

We are like shipwrecked mariners who struggle and struggle to save their wearied bodies from the terrible waves, only to be engulfed in them at last.[1] "The life of most men," says Schopenhauer, "is but a continuous struggle for existence, — a struggle which they are bound to lose at last.[2]" "Every breath we draw is a protest against the Death which is constantly threatening us, and against which we are fighting every second. But Death must conquer after all, for we are his by birth, and he simply plays with his prey a little while before devouring it. We, however, take great pains to prolong our lives as far as we can, just as we blow soap-bubbles as long and as large as possible, though we know with absolute certainty that they must break at last."[3] In an old poem by William Drummond a similar thought is expressed : —

"This life which seems so fair,
Is like a bubble blown up in the air
By sporting children's breath,
Who chase it everywhere
And strive who can most motion it bequeath.
And though it sometimes seem of its own might
Like to an eye of gold to be fixed there,
And firm to hover in that empty height,
That only is because it is so light.

[1] *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, p. 369.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 368. [3] *Ib.*, p. 367.

– But in that pomp it doth not long appear;
For when 'tis most admired, in a thought,
Because it erst was nought, it turns to nought."

Another proof of the futility of life is this: Happiness is a purely negative quantity. It can never be realized except by the satisfaction of a desire. With the satisfaction of the desire, however, the desire itself, and with it the pleasure, ceases. Hence the satisfaction of desire or happiness can mean nothing but liberation from pain or want.[1] To quote Schopenhauer again: "We feel pain, but not painlessness; we feel care, but not freedom from care; fear, but not security. We feel the wish as we feel hunger and thirst; but as soon as it is fulfilled, it is much the same as with the agreeable morsel, which, the very moment it is swallowed, ceases to exist for our sensibility. We miss painfully our pleasures and joys as soon as they fail us; but pains are not immediately missed even when they leave us, after tarrying long with us, but at most we remember them voluntarily by means of reflection. For only pain and want can be felt positively, and so announce themselves as something really present; happiness, on the contrary, is simply negative. Accordingly, we do not appreciate the three greatest goods of life, health, youth, and freedom, as long as we possess them, but only after we have lost them; for these also are negations. That certain days of our life were happy ones, we recog-

[1] *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, p. 376.

nize first of all, after they have made room for unhappy ones."[1] Voltaire expresses the same thought: "Happiness is but a dream, while sorrow is a reality. I have been experiencing this truth for fourscore years. There is nothing left for me but to resign myself to Fate, and to acknowledge that the flies are born to be eaten up by the spiders, and men to be consumed by sorrows."[2]

Now I ask you, Is not all this gross exaggeration? Is not the picture which the pessimist draws a caricature rather than a faithful representation of life? Is not Schopenhauer's description of the human will that of a spoilt child rather than that of a healthy man? Of course, life is not free from disappointment. True, we desire and keep on desiring, we hope and hope, often even against hope, and our hopes extend beyond the grave. But it is not so painful a thing to have desires and hopes, — nay, what would a life be worth without desires and hopes and strivings and expectations? And what would it be without struggle and an occasional disappointment?

Life is movement, action, development; hence there *can* be no fixed or stable goal, a cessation of desire and striving. We cannot imagine that we shall ever reach a point of rest, a stopping-place, and that we could ever be happy in the passive enjoyment of such a state of absolute rest. If life were differently con-

[1] This translation is taken from Sully's *Pessimism.*

[2] See Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea,* Vol. II, pp. 659 f.

stituted, it would be death and not life. *Nur der verdient die Freiheit und das Leben, der täglich sie erobern muss.*

The main trouble with the pessimist is that he regards a permanent, stable *state* of happiness as the highest good, and that he judges life in the light of a means of achieving this good. Life, however, is not a means to an end, but an end in itself, something desired and prized for its own sake. It is not like a railroad journey, a means of reaching a certain given destination, but rather like a ramble through a beautiful forest, something that is enjoyed for its own sake. We enjoy the muscular activity, the shady paths, the rippling brooks, the song of the birds, the chirp of the insects, the beauty and fragrance of the flowers, the warm sunshine and the cooling shade, the blue sky overhead and the mossy banks underfoot. There may be hills to climb, and the exercise may be hard and fatiguing; we may pass through brier and thorn, and tear the flesh; our lips may be parched with thirst, and we may feel the pangs of hunger. And we may suffer many little disappointments on the way, and become the victims of illusion, but the walk, taken as a whole, cannot be called a disappointment and illusion. So it is with life. Life has its lights and shadows, its joys and its sorrows, its victories and defeats.

> "Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
> Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
> Thy fate is the common fate of all,

Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary."

Sunshine and rain are both essential to growth. Pain is a chastener, and often more valuable as a developer of character than pleasure. *Auch der Schmerz ist Gottes Bote.* No strong character can be formed except in the school of sorrow and defeat. Not until you have received some sharp blows from the world, not until the iron has entered into your soul, will you become an able warrior in the ranks of life. "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

And as for the negativity of happiness, the doctrine is psychologically false. Pleasure is just as real and just as positive as pain, — indeed, even the absence of pain is felt as positively pleasurable.

(3) The pessimist also attempts to prove *genetically* that the pains exceed the pleasures of life by referring to the nature and development of knowledge.[1] He believes with the preacher that "in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." The more we know the unhappier we become. Civilization means a multiplication of needs or desires, new needs mean new pains and new disappointments. Moreover, the intelligent being "looks before and after, and pines for what is not." The brute lives in the present alone, regardless of the past and future, suffering neither remorse nor fear of death. Its ignorance is its bliss. Man, on the other hand, reviews the

[1] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, 365 f.

past, and suffers over again the pains that once tortured him; he looks into the future, and foresees the evils awaiting him there. The fear of the coming pain is often more painful than the actual pain itself, and the horror of death is the worst pain of all. Again, man has an ideal self besides a physical self, a social me, as Professor William James calls it, his honor or reputation, the picture of himself in the hearts of others. The more complex society becomes, the greater our dependence upon our fellows and the greater the possibility of injuring the ideal self. Think of the pains of unsatisfied ambition, injured pride, unrequited love, etc., as compared with bodily hurts. And finally, as intelligence increases, our sympathies enlarge, and then we suffer not only our own sorrows, but those of others. We die a thousand deaths.[1]

There is undoubtedly a great deal of truth in these reflections, but they are, like the entire pessimistic philosophy, one-sided. It is true that as life unfolds, the possibilities for suffering pain increase. The surface of sensitivity to pain becomes larger, as it were. But look at the other side of the picture. The pleasures also grow in extent and intent. Civilization creates new needs, very true; but it also creates new means of satisfying them. New needs mean new activities, new activities mean new pleasures. It is likewise true that we anticipate future sorrows, but do we not also look forward to

[1] See, especially, *Parerga*, chap. xii, §§ 154 ff.

future pleasures, and do we not enjoy them in advance? Is not the feeling of hope a joyful feeling; is it not a blessing instead of a curse? Human beings also fear the future, but can we say that they hope less than they fear? Is it not the tendency of men to paint the future in rosy colors, and always to be expecting better things? It seems so to me.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast."
"*Am Grabe noch pflanzt er die Hoffnung auf.*"

And when it comes to looking backward, do we not forget the troubles we have passed through and linger upon the happy hours we have spent? Our griefs lose their sting in retrospect; time heals all wounds. We come to view our sorrows and disappointments as blessings in disguise, as stepping-stones to higher things. The same remarks apply to our ideal selves. We grieve when we are forgotten or not thought well of, when we are despised and hated; but we likewise rejoice when we are loved and admired and applauded. And though we suffer the sorrows of others, we also enjoy their pleasures. Besides, it is sweet to be sympathized with by others; nothing affords us greater consolation in our grief than to gaze into the tearful eyes of friendship; and nothing fills our hearts with deeper joy than to share our good fortune with those we love.

The long and short of it is that, if the growth of intelligence does increase our sorrows, it also

increases our joys. In what proportion? The optimist claims that there is a balance in favor of pleasure or happiness, while the pessimist declares that the pain exceeds the pleasure. We cannot prove either side statistically, but I believe with healthy common sense that optimism is in the right. If the biological view is true, which holds that pleasurable feelings go with beneficial activity, and painful feelings with harmful action, we may claim that a healthy life, one adapted to its surroundings, yields more pleasure than pain, and that inasmuch as the normal healthy beings outnumber the abnormal ones, there is more happiness than sorrow in the world. We may also point out the fact that if pleasure is linked with beneficial activity, and pain with harmful action, then the animals feeling pleasure will be preserved, while the others will perish. The fact that a man is alive at all would, in a measure, indicate that he was happy, for if he did not get more pleasure out of life than pain, the chances are that he would be eliminated. The world belongs to those who can adapt themselves to it and enjoy it.

And even if it could be shown that pain is in excess of pleasure, this would not justify absolute pessimism. Perhaps this world is a vale of tears; but is it necessarily so? Perhaps it is full of sorrow and disappointment; but may that not be due to conditions which may be changed? If the pessimist would only spend the time and energy which he

wastes in complaining and weeping, in ameliorating the conditions of the unfortunate, he would most likely soon be converted into an optimist.

6. *Volitional Pessimism.* — Let us now turn to that form of pessimism which regards the whole world as morally bad, and therefore longs to be delivered from it. Men are knaves, or fools, or both. The end and aim of the average man's existence is to keep himself alive, and he will do anything to realize this purpose. He is a cruel, unjust, and cowardly egoist, whom vanity makes sociable, fear honest. And the only way to succeed in this world is to be tricky and dishonest like the rest. Shakespeare gives poetical expression to this moralistic pessimism, as Paulsen calls it, in one of his best sonnets : —

> "Tired with all these, for restful death I cry —
> As, to behold desert a beggar born,
> And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
> And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
> And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
> And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
> And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
> And strength by limping sway disabled,
> And art made tongue-tied by authority,
> And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
> And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
> And captive Good attending Captain Ill."

And the broken-hearted King Lear thus moralizes upon the injustice of the world : —

> "Through tattered clothes small vices do appear,
> Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,

> And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
> Arm it in rags, the pigmy's sword doth pierce it."

The good are not appreciated, — indeed, they are persecuted by the malicious, envious common herd, who hate virtue because it makes their insignificance and meanness all the more contemptible.

Now is the world really as black as all that? There is undoubtedly much truth in what the accusers of mankind say; but is humanity so absolutely rotten as they rhetorically declaim? How can it be proved? Either *inductively*, that is, by appealing to the facts; or *deductively*, by showing that man is bound to be bad by the very nature of things.

(1) Are there more bad men in the world than good ones? Before we can undertake to answer this question, we must have some criterion by which to measure the moral value of men and times. How must they act in order to be called good? What standard shall we apply to them. Much depends upon the answer given to this question. If you regard as the standard of morality perfect knowledge, or perfect holiness, or perfect anything, the verdict must turn out against the human race. If you demand an absolute suppression of egoistic feelings, the verdict will be unfavorable. If you demand that man absolutely negate his will, that he seek only the pleasures arising from artistic or religious or scientific contemplation, or that he think of nothing but heaven all the time, that he live in rags

in order that others may be clad in purple, then, of course, this world will seem mean and wretched to you. But if you measure humanity by a more human standard, by an ideal to which the race can aspire, the case is not so hopeless. Let us call such acts good as tend to make for physical and spiritual, individual and social, upliftment; let us call those men good who aim to realize this ideal, who care for themselves and others, who are struggling for their own and others' advancement. Now if this be our measuring-rod, is humankind so dreadfully wicked? Are men as grossly egoistic as the pessimist would have us believe? Are they as cruel, vindictive, dishonest, unjust, treacherous, false, envious, malicious, as their accuser paints them?

Well, here again, we must say we have not counted the good and the bad; we have no statistics on the point. It is true, there are evil-minded and evil-doing persons in the world, and we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that we are far from being perfect. There are many wrongs to which we may point. It is true, there is much corruption in politics. The people are often led around by the noses by adroit rascals who are seeking their own personal gain at the expense of the community and in the name of patriotism, that much-abused word. Parties are too frequently willing to damage the country which they are pretending to serve, merely for the sake of injuring the opposing party, which is supposed to bear the entire responsibility. The influential boss can

often control legislation, as can the millionaire and the rich corporation. "Plate sin with gold, and the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks." And good men meet with defeat in the struggle for existence, or, at any rate, are regarded by the world as failures, as unpractical dreamers, whom nobody minds, while incense is burned at the altars of unscrupulous villains, charlatans, and fools whose purses are as fat as their hearts are empty.

But is that the whole story? Are there not many good men in the world? Are there not many who are fighting on the side of truth and justice, many who are willing to sacrifice themselves for their fellows? Is it really true that dishonesty and trickery are the conditions of success, that a man cannot thrive unless he be a knave? It seems, the very fact that we pay so much attention to the *successful* rascals shows that we are *surprised* at their success, that it is unusual for thieves and liars to win the battle of life. If it were the rule the world over for falsehood and sham to lead to health and wealth, should we be so shocked and chagrined thereby? The moral heroes and the moral villains stand out in bold relief as the observed of all observers, while the great mass of men who are neither angels nor devils pass by unnoticed.

(2) Nor can we prove that the world and its inhabitants must of necessity be bad. Is man an original sinner? Is sin hereditary with him, as Saint Augustine and Schopenhauer and many others would hold?

According to Schopenhauer man is a crass egoist by nature, and egoism is bad, hence no good can come out of him. But man is not a crass egoist. Schopenhauer himself believes that we can free ourselves from our wicked wills, that we can negate the will, suppress our egoistic strivings, and lose ourselves in the contemplation of the objects of art, science, and religion; hence we cannot be so bad after all. And those who believe in the total depravity of man are likewise optimistic enough to believe that there is some way out of the difficulty, either through Christ or the groundless grace of God, so unwilling are they to concede the necessary loss of a single human soul.

It is much easier to show on *a priori* grounds that man is not radically bad than the opposite. Man is both egoistic and altruistic; he acts for his own good and that of others. Humanity could not exist and realize the ideals which have been realized if men were absolutely bad. The fact of their living together at all proves that obedience to the laws of morality is the rule and not the exception. If men were as immoral as the pessimist paints them, society would go to pieces. The fact that it takes unusually adroit men to succeed in spite of their dishonesty shows how hard it is to break the moral law and thrive. "The wages of sin is death." This is as profound a truth as was ever uttered.

But even if it were true, even if the world were a hotbed of corruption, why should we despair? Why

should we not make ourselves and the world better? Let us strive to improve it, and not sit idly by, weeping and moaning over its wickedness. Let us strike at wrong wherever it shows its head, let us enroll ourselves in the ranks of virtue and fight the great battle of the right against the wrong. The best way to grow strong in righteousness is to combat evil. And we can make no better beginning than by first improving ourselves. "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

(3) The attempt is also made to prove pessimism genetically by comparing the present with the past. Just as sorrow is increasing, vice is increasing; men are growing worse and worse; the times are out of joint. The world is degenerating. There was a time, says Rousseau, when things were better. In his primitive days, man lived peacefully, virtuously, and happily, but with the progress of civilization and culture all this has been changed. We are growing away from the sweet simplicity of the past, and our demands on life and the values we put upon things are changing. Social inequalities are multiplying, carrying in their train all the vices of an artificial mode of existence. We esteem knowledge, not for itself, but simply as we value diamonds and precious jewels, because it gives to its possessors something not enjoyed by others. Wealth and culture are the badges of classes, and valued merely as

such. The rich and cultured are becoming more lordly, haughty, supercilious, and unsympathetic, while the poor and ignorant are made more servile, cowardly, deceitful, and base by the artificial conditions of the times.

It is, however, not true that the world is getting worse, that the original state was a blissful moral state. This conception of a better past is common to many religions and peoples. The Greeks believed in a golden age, the Jews in Paradise. It is characteristic of old age to live in and glorify the past, largely perhaps because it is past. The evils of the present are distinctly before us; the evils of the past we are apt to forget, and to think only of its bright sides. Besides, old age has formed its habits, the habits of the past, and we all know how hard it is to accept new ways of thinking, feeling, and willing. You can't teach an old dog new tricks, as the saying is. The old man often feels out of place in the world with its new habits, and so comes to regard everything in it as wrong. He makes the same objections to the present which his parents made to his past, which was their present.

But is the present really worse than the past? Here again everything depends upon our conception of the better and the worse. If you do not believe in the progress of political and religious freedom, you will condemn the present. If you hate the rabble so called, and find that the plain man of the people is playing a greater rôle in the world than you are

willing he should play, you will find fault with the times. If you regard civilization with its culture and luxury as an absolute evil, you will hate the present. If you believe that men ought to live the lives of mediæval ascetics, that they should despise literature, science, and art, then you cannot contemplate our age with pleasure.

But if you believe with me that the ideal of mankind is to develop the physical and spiritual powers of the race in harmony with each other and in adaptation to the surroundings, to make men more rational and sympathetic, to give them control over themselves and nature, to bring the blessings of civilization within the reach of the humblest and most neglected, then you will have to admit that our times are better than the past. If civilization is better than savagery, then the present is better than the past. If a wider and deeper sympathy with living beings, justice, and truth, are better than hatred, cruelty, prejudice, and injustice, then civilization is better than savagery. The good old times solved their problems in their way; let us solve ours in our way. Let us be thankful that the past is gone, and look with hope to a brighter and better future.[1]

[1] See the excellent chapter on "The Moral Progress of the Race," in Williams, *Review of Evolutional Ethics*, pp. 466 ff.

CHAPTER XI

CHARACTER AND FREEDOM[1]

1. *Virtues and Vices.* — We have found that such acts are right as tend to promote welfare, and that such are wrong as tend to do the reverse. We have also found that acts are the outward expressions of inner psychical states, that they are prompted by something on the inner side. Among these inner states we mentioned the so-called egoistic and altruistic impulses and feelings, and the so-called moral sentiments. Morality, therefore, or moral conduct, springs from the human heart; it represents the will of humanity. Moral conduct, like all conduct, is the outward expression of the human will. Men act morally or for the welfare of themselves and others because they desire or will that welfare.

[1] Green, *Prolegomena*, Bk. I, chap. iii, Bk. II, chap. i; Stephen, *The Science of Ethics*, pp. 264–294; Münsterberg, *Die Willenshandlung;* Fouillée, *La liberté et déterminisme;* Sigwart, *Der Begriff des Wollens und sein Verhältniss zum Begriff der Causalität;* Wundt, *Ethics*, Part III, chap. i, 1, 2, 3; Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. II, chap. ix; Thilly, "The Freedom of the Will," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. III, pp. 385–411; Hyslop, *Elements*, chaps. iv, v; Mackenzie, *Manual*, chap. viii; Seth, *Ethical Principles*, Part III, chap. i. For history of the freewill question, see Penzig, *Arthur Schopenhauer und die menschliche Willensfreiheit;* A. Alexander, *Theories of the Will.*

Humanity as a whole desires its own preservation and advancement, and therefore performs acts which tend to realize the desired end.

We call such acts as tend to promote welfare *virtuous*, their opposites *vicious*. We call the will that tends to express itself in virtuous acts a good or virtuous will, its opposite vicious. Acts which ought to be done we call *duties*, persons who do them *dutiful*.

Morality is based upon impulses. Because men desire the preservation of themselves and others they are moral. But — and this is an important point — an impulse as such is not necessarily a virtue, though it may be fashioned into one. The impulse to preserve your life is not necessarily a virtue. Your desire to preserve yourself may be so irrational as to destroy you. Your desire for food may be so strong as to cause your ruin. Nor is the sympathetic impulse necessarily a virtue. Your sympathy for a person may be so irrational as to injure both you and the person for whom you feel it.

Virtues are rational impulses, *i.e.*, impulses or volitions fashioned in such a manner as to realize moral ends. They are impulses guided by reason, controlled by ideas. Impulses are formed or fashioned or educated by experience with natural and social surroundings. Exaggerated impulses are corrected and weak ones strengthened. Impulses may also be reënforced or defeated by the aid of the moral sentiments or the conscience. An extreme egoistic impulse may be held in check by the feeling of obli-

gation; and a weak altruistic impulse intensified in the same way. A person who is exceedingly selfish may be kept within proper bounds by his conscience, by the feeling that he ought not to indulge his desire to advance himself at the expense of others; while an individual lacking altruism may be urged by his conscience to care for others. Or the feeling of obligation may influence a man who cares little for self-advancement to preserve and develop his life, and cause one who is too altruistically inclined to modify his altruism.[1]

2. *Character.* — Impulses are fashioned into fixed habits of action, which cannot easily be changed, and a *character* is formed. "A character," as J. S. Mill says, "is a completely fashioned will," and by will here is meant "an aggregate of tendencies to act in a firm and prompt and definite way upon the principal emergencies of life."[2] We may, therefore, say that a character is the combined product of one's natural tendencies or impulses, and the environment acting upon them. In other words, a man's character depends upon his will or nature or disposition, and the influences exerted upon it by the outside world of living and lifeless things. This implies: (1) that the individual starts out with a certain stock in trade, certain impulses or tendencies, or, to state it physiologically, a peculiarly constituted brain and nervous system; (2) that these tendencies or

[1] See Paulsen, *Ethics*, Bk. III, chap. i.
[2] See James, *Psychology*, Vol. I, chap. iv.

impulses, this brain and nervous system, may be influenced and modified, hence that a person may be educated into morality; (3) that what a man will be, must depend, to some extent, upon what he is, that is, upon his native disposition.

A man may have been endowed by nature with bountiful intellectual and physical gifts, but the absence of favorable conditions or the presence of unfavorable ones may hinder these capacities from being realized. A person who might have become an athlete, had he been born in a certain climate and had he received the proper training, may turn out to be physically deficient. So, too, a man who might have become a great artist may find his natural powers weakening from lack of exercise.

In order, then, to form a moral character, we need a natural capacity for goodness, so to speak, and favorable life conditions. We have just seen that the absence of the latter is bound to show its effects. But the former also, the native endowment, is needed. A man with a dwarfed brain can never become an intellectual prodigy. But there are many gradations from a diseased brain and organism to a perfectly healthy and well-developed system, and consequently many gradations in physical excellence. Some persons seem to be utterly devoid of moral impulses, and consequently bound to turn out bad. Some criminals are criminals by nature. They are what has been called by alienists morally insane. Such individuals are usually without the impulses

upon which morality is based. "Modern reformatories have testified to the possibility of the redemption of a large number of criminals from their evil life, but they have shown, nevertheless, that there is a lust of cupidity, a love of meanness, and an animality from which rescue is almost if not quite impossible. The reaction of men whose past opportunities have been about equal, upon effort for their reform, exhibits also very different degrees of readiness. The testimony of reformatories for the young is especially of worth on this point; and I once heard Mrs. Mary Livermore describe the faces of many of the children to be found in a certain institution of this sort as bearing fearful witness to the fact that they had been 'mortgaged to the devil before they were born.' I remember a number of cases cited by the matron of a certain orphan asylum, showing that children taken from their home at too early an age to have learned the sins of their parents by imitation may yet repeat those sins. Out of three children of the same parents, the one of whom was a drunkard and prostitute, the other a thief, one developed, at a very early age, a tendency to dishonesty, another an extreme morbid eroticism, and the third child appeared to have escaped the evil inheritance; but he was still very young when I last heard of him."[1] "Whoever is destitute of moral feeling is, to that extent, a defective being; he marks the beginning of race-degeneracy; and if propitious influence do

[1] Williams, *Evolutional Ethics*, Part II, pp. 405 f.

not chance to check or to neutralize the morbid tendency, his children will exhibit a further degree of degeneracy, and be actual morbid varieties. Whether the particular outcome of the morbid strain shall be vice, or madness, or crime, will depend much on the circumstances of life." "When we make a scientific study of the fundamental meaning of those deviations from the sound type which issue in insanity and crime, by searching inquiry into the laws of their genesis, it appears that these forms of human degeneracy do not lie so far asunder as they are commonly supposed to do. Moreover, theory is here confirmed by observation; for it has been pointed out by those who have made criminals their study that they oftentimes spring from families in which insanity, epilepsy, or some allied neurosis exists, that many of them are weak-minded, epileptic, or actually insane, and that they are apt to die from diseases of the nervous system and from tubercular diseases."[1]

3. *The Freedom of the Will.* — The preceding statements naturally suggest the problem of the freedom of the will, which we shall now consider. Is the will free or is it determined? Before we can answer this question we must understand the terms involved in our discussion.

[1] Maudsley, *Pathology of Mind*, pp. 102 ff., quoted by Williams, *loc. cit.* See also Lombroso, *L'homme criminel;* Krafft-Ebing, *Psychiatrie*, Vol. II, p. 65; Strümpell, *Pedagogische Pathologie;* Williams, *Evolutional Ethics*, pp. 402 ff.; Paulsen, *Ethics*, pp. 373 ff., 475 ff.

Let us see. By the will we may mean the attitude of the ego toward its ideas, *i.e.*, the element of decision, the fiat or veto, will in the narrow sense of the term.[1] Or by will we may mean the so-called impulsiveness of consciousness, that is, the tendency of consciousness to act, the so-called self-determination of the soul.[2] Thus in attention there is psychic energy. Whether I pay attention to a loud noise or force my attention upon my lesson, I am always putting forth mental energy, I am willing in the broader sense of the term. This psychic energy or conation is present in all states of consciousness; every state of consciousness is impulsive or energetic.

By freedom we may mean unhindered by an external force. A nation or individual is free when not hindered by an outer force; I am free when I can do what I please, that is, when my acts are the expression of my consciousness, the outflow of my own will, not the expression of some consciousness outside of mine. This is what the average man means by freedom when he applies the term to human beings. Man is free to do what he pleases, means that he is not hindered in his willing. In this sense there can be no doubt of the possibility of man's freedom. I am free to get up or sit down, free to teach or not to teach, *as I please*. If I *will* to get up, I can get up; if I *will* to sit down I am free to do that.

[1] See chap. viii, § 3 (4).

[2] See chap. viii, § 3 (4), p. 215, note 2.

But by freedom I may mean something else. I may mean by free something uncaused, undetermined, having no necessary antecedents, self-caused, *causa sui*, an uncaused cause. God, we say, is uncaused, not caused by something outside of Himself, *causa sui*.

If we apply this last conception to the will in the narrow sense of the term, *free will* means: The will is uncaused, undetermined by antecedents. I will that A be done instead of B, I give my consent, or assent, to A without being determined thereto by anything outside of me or inside of me. I, as will, decide for or against an act absolutely, without being influenced to do so. Not only, then, can I *do* as I please, but I can *please* as I please.

If we employ the term will in the broader sense, and accept the second interpretation of freedom, free will means: The energy of the soul, the activity or impulsiveness of consciousness, is an uncaused or indeterminate factor, dependent upon nothing. We can put forth any amount of effort of attention or psychic force at any time. The amount of effort put forth depends upon no antecedents whatever; it is not determined by anything; it is free or indeterminate.[1]

In short, the libertarian view holds that the will, in whatever sense we take it, is not subject to the

[1] See James, *Psychology*, Vol. II, chap. xxvi; also "The Dilemma of Determinism," in *The Will to Believe;* Ladd, *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory*, chap. xxvi.

law of causality; it is a cause without being an effect. Freedom here means, as Kant and Schopenhauer put it, the faculty of beginning a causal series. A man is free when he has the power to begin a causal series without being in any way determined thereto. Psychical activity is free when it acts without cause, when it depends upon no antecedent event. I will to perform a certain act; nothing has determined me to will as I did; under the same conditions I could have willed otherwise. However this view may be modified, freedom essentially means a causeless will.

The deterministic view opposes this conception, and holds that there is no such thing as an uncaused process, either in the physical or psychical sphere; that every phenomenon or occurrence, be it a movement or a thought, a feeling or an act of will, is caused, not an independent factor, but dependent upon something else.

4. *Determinism.* — Which of these two views is correct? Is the will caused or uncaused? Let us see. By a cause we mean the antecedent or concomitant, or the group of antecedents and concomitants, without which the phenomenon cannot appear. The scientist explains things by revealing their invariable antecedents or causes, by showing that things act uniformly under the same conditions. It is a postulate of science that all phenomena in the universe are subject to law in the sense that they are caused, that there is a reason for their

being and acting so and not otherwise. Now can we apply the same formula to human willing, or, let us say, making the statement as broad as possible, to the human mind as a whole? Has the human mind any such antecedents or concomitants, or is it independent of them? Is there any reason why the mind should think, feel, and will as it does? Is it dependent upon anything for thinking, feeling, and willing in this way?

Science will naturally answer the question in the affirmative. Its ideal is to explain the world, and explanation is impossible unless things happen according to law, unless there is uniformity in action. Even where we are unable to find the invariable antecedents or causes, we imagine them to be present, though we may regard their discovery as practically impossible.

Now the scientific investigation of mind seems to show uniformity of action. Under the same circumstances the same states occur; the same antecedents seem to be followed by the same consequents. In the first place, we may say that in order to have human consciousness we must be born with human minds, with human capacities for sensation, ideation, feeling, and willing. Physiologically speaking, we must have a human brain, human sense-organs, a human body. In a certain sense, all human beings are alike dependent upon the nature of the consciousness which they inherit from the race. What a being is going to think, feel, and

will in this world depends, to some extent, upon the mental and physical stock in trade with which he begins life.

Not only, however, does man inherit the general characteristics of the race; he also inherits specific qualities from his ancestors. Just as a man may inherit a weak or a vigorous brain and more or less perfect sense-organs, so he may receive from his nation or his ancestors a capacity for thinking, feeling, and willing in a particular way. In short, if we embrace all mental tendencies or capacities or functions under one term, *character*, we may say that every individual has a character of his own, and that this character is dependent upon the entire past. As Tyndall says: "It is generally admitted that the man of to-day is the child and product of incalculable antecedent times. His physical and intellectual textures have been woven for him during his passage through phases of history and forms of existence which lead the mind back to an abysmal past."[1]

We may say that the way in which the world affects an individual must depend largely upon his character. Physiologically stated, the impression made by an external stimulus upon a human brain will depend largely upon the nature of the entire organism affected, which does not merely *receive* excitations, but *transforms* them according to its nature. This character, this brain, is the heir of all the ages, an epitome of the past. It is what it

[1] "Science and Man," *Fortnightly Review*, 1877, p. 594.

is because many other things have been what they were. In this sense we may say that it is determined. I have a human body and not an animal's, because I am the child of human parents; I have a particular human body because I am the child of a particular race, of a particular nation, a particular family. Similarly I may say that I have a human mind, a human will, a particular human mind and a particular will, because I am the child of a particular race, nation, age, and family.

The mind, then, is, in a certain sense, determined by the past. But it is likewise determined by the present. Just as a seed needs certain favorable conditions in order to grow and thrive, a character needs an environment suitable to its development. To express it physiologically, a brain needs stimuli in order that it may act out its nature. It will develop from immaturity to maturity only under the proper conditions. Just as a man must exercise his muscles properly in order to develop them, he must exercise his mental powers in order to develop them.

As was said before, we must give due weight to both the inside and the outside, the character and its physical and social environment. The brain requires stimulation in order to act at all; it will not develop without being incited to action from without. But it is not merely a puppet in the hands of the external world; it does not merely *receive*, but *gives;* it strikes back. That is, it reacts upon stimuli *according to its own nature.* Similarly, the mind is

not merely a passive thing, but an active thing; character is not merely a creature, but a creator. The manner in which a person will think, feel, and act will depend not merely upon the outward circumstances, but upon the inner. Stating the matter psychologically and applying it to the subject of the will, we may say: Whether an idea or feeling is to have motive power or not, depends altogether upon the character of the individual, which has been formed by a multitude of influences and conditions.

Scientific psychology, then, is deterministic in the sense of claiming that states of consciousness, like other facts in the universe, have their invariable antecedents, concomitants, and consequents. Mental phenomena are inserted into the general system of things like all other phenomena. They are not isolated and independent processes without connection with the rest of the world, but parts of an interrelated whole.

5. *Theological Theories.* — Now that we have considered the psychological answer to the question of free will and determinism, let us briefly examine the attitude of theology and metaphysics toward the problem. Theology is either deterministic or libertarian, according to the conceptions from which it starts out. The great thesis of Christian theology has always been that Christ came to save man from sin. Now, reasoned Augustine, if Christ came to save man from sin, then evidently man was not able to save himself, he was *unable not to sin;* he was

determined to sin, and hence not free.[1] This is the doctrine of original sin. Other theologians make the same thesis their starting-point, and reach a different conclusion. If Christ saved man from sin, then evidently man was a sinner. But man cannot be a sinner unless he has the power of freedom to sin or not to sin, for sin implies freedom. Hence, if sin is to mean anything, man must be free.[2]

Or, the theologian may make the conception of God his starting-point, and reach either freedom or determinism. God is all-powerful, say some, and man wholly dependent upon Him. If man were free, then God could not determine him one way or the other, man would represent an independent entity in God's universe; which would rob God of some of His power. No, say others, God is all-good, hence He cannot have determined man to sin. If man were determined by God to sin, then God would not be an all-good God; He would be responsible for the evil in the world. But as He is not responsible for the evil, this must be the result of man's choice. Hence, man is not determined, but free.

6. *Metaphysical Theories.* — Metaphysics, too, may be either deterministic or indeterministic. Materialism assumes that matter is the essence or principle of reality, that everything in the world is matter in motion, and that nothing can happen without cause. If these premises are true, then of course mind is

[1] See also Luther and Calvin.
[2] See Pelagius and the Jesuits.

the effect of motion, or only a different form of motion, and is governed or determined by the laws of matter.

According to spiritualism or idealism, mind is the principle of reality, and everything is a manifestation of mind. According to monistic spiritualism, there is one fundamental mind or intelligence in the universe, of which all individual intelligences or minds are the manifestation. Kant calls this principle the intelligible or noumenal world, the thing-in-itself or freedom; Fichte calls it the practical ego; Hegel calls it the universal reason; Schopenhauer calls it the will. The principle itself is regarded as free, uncaused, self-caused, or self-originative. But if man's mind is a manifestation of this principle, then man's mind depends upon it, cannot be without it, must act in accordance with its nature, is determined by it. Kant and Schopenhauer both hold that man's empirical character, that is, his phenomenal character, his character as we know it, is determined by the intelligible character, the noumenal character, the principle of which it is the manifestation.[1]

According to pluralistic or individualistic spiritualism, there are many minds or principles. Duns Scotus, the schoolman, regards every human being as an individualistic principle, absolutely free to choose and to act, not bound to choose or act in any particular way. If this standpoint is strictly adhered to, — and it is the only possible standpoint for those

[1] See also Green, *op. cit.*

who accept the freedom of indifference, — then each individual is practically a creator. Leibniz, too, is a pluralist, but his pluralism differs somewhat from the pluralism of Duns Scotus. The world consists of monads or metaphysical points, or spiritual substances, each one of which is free in the sense of not being determined from without, that is, by any power outside of itself. Each spirit is, as Leibniz puts it, "a little divinity in its own department." But since whatever happens in the monad happens in accordance with its own nature, the monad is really determined by its own nature. I must think, feel, and act as I do because it is my nature or character so to think, feel, and act.

If we reject both spiritualism and materialism, and regard mental and physical processes as two sides of an underlying principle which is neither mind nor matter, but the cause of both, then both mind and matter are determined by this principle, and are not free. The principle itself, however, may be free or uncaused or self-originating.

According to dualism we have two principles, mind and matter, each one differing in essence from the other. Each person is a corporeal and spiritual substance. Dualism may be either deterministic or indeterministic, according as it is claimed that the mental realm is governed by law or not. Some thinkers have reasoned that, since mind and matter go together or run parallel with each other, and since matter is governed by law, mind must be governed

by law. Others have denied this assumption and have insisted that mind at least, or the human will, is free and uncaused.[1]

7. *Reconciliation of Freedom and Determinism.* — Now what shall be our conclusion on this point? In a certain sense we may accept a kind of freedom. All systems assume that the principle of being, whether it be matter or mind, or both, or neither, has neither beginning nor end, has nothing outside of itself upon which it depends, and that it is therefore uncaused or unexplainable. We must also maintain that the principle is determined in the sense that it shows uniformity of action, or is governed by law. This does not mean, however, that it is forced or compelled or coerced or pushed into action, but that it acts with regularity and uniformity.[2] Even the atom of materialism is free in the sense of not being coerced by anything outside of itself; it is determined in that it does not act capriciously and contrary to law, but uniformly and lawfully. And the human mind or will may be said to possess similar characteristics. The will is determined in the sense that it has uniform antecedents, that it does not act capriciously and without reason, but according to law. The will is free in the sense that it is not coerced by anything outside of itself. "If the nature of causality," as Paulsen aptly says, "consisted of

[1] For example, Descartes.

[2] See Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy*, English translation, pp. 318 ff.

an external necessity which excludes inner necessity, they would be right who rebel against its application to the mental sphere. Only in that case they ought to go a step farther and maintain that the causal law is invalid not only for the will, but for the entire soul-life. But if we define the notion of causality correctly, if we mean by it what Hume and Leibniz meant by it, that is, the regular harmony between the changes of many elements, then it is plain that it prevails in the mental world no less than in nature. It may be more difficult to detect uniformity in the former case or to reduce it to elementary laws than in the latter. Still it is evident that such uniformity exists. Isolated or lawless elements exist in neither sphere; each element is definitely related to antecedent, simultaneous, and succeeding elements. We can hardly reduce these relations to mathematical formulæ anywhere; but their existence is perfectly plain everywhere. Everybody tacitly assumes that under wholly identical inner and outer circumstances the same will invariably ensue; the same idea, the same emotion, and the same volition will follow the same stimulus. Freedom by no means conflicts with causality properly understood; freedom is not exemption from law. Surely ethics has no interest in a freedom of inner life that is equivalent to lawlessness and incoherency. On the contrary, the occurrence of absolutely disconnected elements, isolated volitions standing in no causal connection with the past and future, would mean derangement of the

will, nay, the complete destruction of psychical existence. If there were no determination whatever of the consequent by the antecedent, then, of course, there could be no such thing as exercise and experience, there could be no efficacy in principles and resolutions, in education and public institutions."[1]

8. *Criticism of Indeterminism.* — But we cannot maintain that the will is free in the Scotian sense.[2]

(1) Wherever in the world we have a phenomenon we seek for its cause in some antecedent phenomenon or sum of phenomena. If we acknowledge the application of the causal law to the events of physical nature, and deny its validity in the mental sphere, we present an exception to the uniformity of nature. And as Bain says: "Where there is no uniformity, there is clearly no rational guidance, no prudential foresight." Every act, be it ever so insignificant, has its antecedent cause. I can sit down or get up as I please, but whether I please or not depends upon conditions which may be apparent or concealed. James holds in his article on "The Dilemma of Determinism"[3] that the world would be no less rational if actions like the bending into one street rather than into another were left to absolute volition. However, such a slight deviation from the law would be, as far as the principle is con-

[1] Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 221. See also his *Ethics*, p. 460 note.

[2] See § 6. Parts of what follows are taken from my article in the *Philosophical Review*, referred to on page 311 note.

[3] *The Will to Believe.*

cerned, as great a miracle as though the planet Jupiter should sway from its path. It would make the entire universe irrational. In the words of Riehl: "However infinitely small the difference between such a world and the real one might appear to the fancy, for the understanding an infinitely small deviation from the law of determination of occurrences, from the general law of causality, would still remain an infinitely great miracle. There would arise out of the ability to perform apparently insignificant acts with absolute freedom, the ability to pervert the entire order of nature in continually increasing extents. The consequences of a single element of irrationality, an exception to the law of causation, could not but make the whole of nature irrational, just as a very little amount of ferment is able to produce fermentation in an entire organic mass. Nature could not exist alongside of an undetermined power of freedom."[1]

(2) In order to escape these difficulties many devices are resorted to. We must think in terms of causality; true. But, nevertheless, the will is free. In order to make these two contradictions agree, causality is simply interpreted to mean freedom or non-causality. In other words, a special theory of causality is often manufactured to meet the requirements of the libertarian doctrine. Dr. Ward[2] is guilty of such a fabricated scheme of harmonizing

[1] Riehl, *Kriticismus*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 243.
[2] *Dublin Review*, July, 1874.

opposites. He will not grant that "free" and "uncaused" are synonyms. There are two kinds of causation; in the one case it means a law of uniform phenomenal sequence. By this kind of causation the physical world is ruled, *the important exception being miracles.* But there is also such a thing as *originative* causation. An intelligent substance, for example, acts as an originative cause. Such a substance is the human soul. Dr. Ward bases his interpretation of the causal law on the hypothesis of freedom, which is the very thing to be proved. You say, he exclaims, there is no such a thing as an originative cause? Look at the human will. You have anti-impulsive will-acts due to the soul's power of absolute choice. You say, he continues, that free will violates the causal principle? Not at all, for what does causation signify but originative cause? — It is evident we have here an excellent example of the *circulus vitiosus.*

Martineau[1] may be accused of the same vicious reasoning. The will, he says, is a cause, *i.e.*, "it is something which terminates the balance of possibilities in favor of this phenomenon rather than that." This notion he applies to the universe, then back again to the will. He wants to show that the idea of causality applied does not make for determinism, but for freedom; he begins by assuming that causality equals freedom. His false reasoning is very apparent. Determinists say, according to him,

[1] *Study of Religion*, Vol. II, Bk. III, pp. 196–324.

every action must have a cause, the will must be controlled by motives, for nothing can be without a cause. The will cannot be free because of this causal principle. Yes, answers Martineau, if causality means that different effects must have different causes, then the will is not free. But it is not true that different effects must have different causes. The will is not determined, because different effects need not have different causes. They need not have different causes, because in the will we have an example of a cause which has the power to determine an alternative, *i.e.*, a free cause. This amounts to saying, The will is free because it is free.

(3) We observe, then, that a free will in this sense is wholly inconceivable; it violates the law of causality. The psychological investigation has already shown that it contradicts the facts. We must now also insist that, if the will *is* free, it is utterly useless to attempt to determine it. And yet everybody acts on the conviction that this may be done. If nothing can determine it, what is the use of education, of laws, of arguments, of entreaties, of moral suasion, of punishment, and all those means employed to determine conduct? How can an utterly groundless willing be in any way held responsible? The voluntary activity has been initiated without being caused. Hence nothing can be done to affect it. Like a *deus ex machina*, the free will enters upon the scene of action, and in the same

mysterious manner disappears. How can it be approached, this guilty party? Why offer it motives if these have no influence? Besides, if the will does not come under the causal law, why speak of its development during the various periods of race and individual life? If it cannot be determined, how explain the influences of disease and stimulants on it? Why should it ever degenerate? What becomes of it in sleep? Where is it in the hypnotized state?

What would morality be to a person absolutely free? "Indeterminism," says Riehl, "would subject our moral life to contingency." The free will cannot be impelled by reason to act; it can in no way be determined to adopt the more reasonable course, but acts groundlessly. Nor can conscience be of avail, nor remorse, nor any other ethical feeling. A person acting without cause would be utterly unreliable; in fact, the ideal free man's actions would resemble those of the lunatic. To desire such freedom would, indeed, as Leibniz exclaims, be to desire to be a fool. Or, in Schelling's words: "To be able to decide for A and non-A without any motives whatsoever, would, in truth, simply be a prerogative to act in an altogether irrational manner."

I also fail to see in what respect the cause of libertarianism is helped by granting that the will cannot act without motives, but that it is, in some cases, able to choose one motive to the exclusion of the

other, and that, too, without cause. The same fallacy obtains in the reasoning, whether you extend or limit this faculty of the will to begin a new causal series. When Martineau asserts the will to be a cause "which terminates the balance of possibilities in favor of this phenomenon rather than that," he maintains absolute freedom of volition, and lays himself open to all the objections urged above.

9. *The Consciousness of Freedom.* — There are, it is said, certain facts which make for free will. "I hold, therefore," says Sidgwick, "that against the formidable array of cumulative evidence offered for Determinism, there is but one argument of real force; the immediate affirmation of consciousness in the moment of deliberate action."[1]

(1) Now, if it were really true that we have a consciousness of being free in the sense in which this term has been used, this feeling would have as little weight as a scientific proof as the feeling that the sun moves around the earth has for astronomy. Where a man accepts this "immediate intuition of the soul's freedom" as a proof of its actuality, he is simply asserting that his soul is free because he feels it to be free.[2]

(2) And even granting that such a feeling can prove anything, must we not show (*a*) that it exists, and (*b*) what it tells us? Libertarians claim that men are conscious of being free, and see herein a proof of their thesis. But the all-important ques-

[1] *Methods of Ethics*, p. 67. [2] Dr. Ward.

tion is, whether men really say and believe themselves to be free in the sense in which these philosophers claim that they are free. The libertarian is apt to throw into this consciousness of freedom his entire doctrine, thereby garbling the facts to suit his theory.

It is necessary, therefore, to analyze this consciousness of freedom. Before the volition takes place there may be present in consciousness a feeling that I can do either this or that. In the moment of willing no such feeling exists, while after the act has been willed and executed I say to myself, I might have done otherwise. Now all the possibilities of *action* occur to me, my mind is in a different state, certain ideas and feelings that formerly exerted an irresistible influence are no longer present, or only dimly remembered. All the conditions being changed, I feel as though I could have *acted* differently. And so I could have done, if only I had *willed* differently, and so I could have *willed* differently, if only the conditions of willing had been different. I can do what I will to do; I am free to get up or sit down, free to go home or stay here, to give up all my prospects in life, if only I *will* to do so. Never does my consciousness tell me that a volition is uncaused, that there was no reason for my willing as I did will, that the will is the absolute beginning of an occurrence, that at any moment any volition may arise regardless of all antecedent processes. Least of all does it tell me that I am the

manifestation of an intelligible self which I feel to be free.

Against those who so strongly emphasize the sense of freedom, we may urge the deterministic standpoint generally accepted in all the affairs of life. We regard the actions of men as necessary functions of their character. In all historical sciences, we invariably seek for the causes of events; we analyze the characters of the actors, and show the influences of their times and surroundings. Our entire social life is based on the conviction that under certain conditions men will act in a certain way. That this is so, let the methods of education and government attest.

10. *Responsibility.* — The feeling of responsibility is also urged against determinism, and accepted as a proof of liberty. This, however, proves nothing but that acts and motives depend upon character or flow from the will of the agent. The person regards every voluntary action of his as the expression of his personality, which, in truth, it is. The act is *his*, willed by him and acknowledged by him, the product of his own character. He does not regard his character as something outside of himself, as something forcing him in a certain direction, pushing him now hither, now thither, but identifies himself with it. In fact, he is his character, and therefore holds *himself* responsible for his acts and motives. And because he feels himself as an agent, the acts as *his* acts, he sees no reason why this self from which

the acts emanated should not be held responsible. Who else should be held responsible but the willing personality?

But if character is the necessary product of conditions, why *hold* any one responsible, even though he feel himself responsible? If man's acts are the effect of causes, why punish him for what he cannot help? Because punishment is a powerful determining cause. Why should I be held responsible for my deeds? "The reply is," in Tyndall's words, "the right of society to protect itself against aggressive injurious forces, whether they be bound or free, forces of nature or forces of man."[1] Punishment can have a meaning only in a deterministic scheme of things. We can by education make a moral being out of man, that is, influence his character, determine him to act for the social good. As Riehl expresses it epigrammatically: "Man is not held responsible because he is by birth a moral being; he becomes a moral being because he is held responsible."

11. *Determinism and Practice.* — There are many men who, while acknowledging the arguments of the deterministic theory to be unanswerable, yet reject it on practical grounds. They claim that life would be impossible on such an hypothesis.

The deterministic theory is not, however, a discouraging and paralyzing doctrine. On the contrary, the knowledge that we are determined must

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, 1877, "Science and Man," p. 612.

determine us to avoid certain conditions, and seek others more favorable. Determinism does not destroy the energy of action. Fatalistic nations like the Mohammedans were far more energetic than Christian ascetics, who believed in the will's absolute freedom. Determinism is the strongest motive to action. If I am exceedingly desirous of fame, how can the knowledge that this desire depends upon conditions affect me? Why should it make me less ambitious? If I have been morally educated, I shall continue to strive after certain things in spite of my belief in determinism. I shall go right on deliberating and choosing as heretofore, and make an effort to live an honorable, useful life. "Now when it is said by a fatalist," Butler writes, "that the whole constitution of nature, and the actions of men, that every thing and every mode and every circumstance of every thing, is necessary, and could not possibly have been otherwise, it is to be observed, that this necessity does not exclude deliberation, choice, preference, and acting from certain principles and to certain ends; because all this is a matter of undoubted experience, acknowledged by all, and what every man may, every moment, be conscious of."[1] "The author of nature then being certainly of some character or other, notwithstanding necessity, it is evident this necessity is as reconcilable with the particular character of benevolence, veracity, and justice, in him, which attributes are

[1] *Analogy of Religion*, chap. vi, p. 153.

the foundation of religion, as with any other character; since we find their necessity no more hinders *men* from being benevolent than cruel; true than faithless; just than unjust, or, if the fatalist pleases, what we call unjust."[1]

[1] *Analogy of Religion*, chap. vi, p. 159.

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